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# Perspectives on Growing Social Tension in China

An Intelligence Assessment

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## Perspectives on Growing Social Tension in China

### Key Judgments

*Information available  
as of 22 May 1989  
was used in this report.*

Events of the last several months have cast doubt on China's ability to weather the social strains that accompany reform and modernization in a backward, Communist country. Student protests in April and May 1989, with their demands for greater freedom and political accountability, are dramatic demonstrations of the widening gulf between an urban intelligentsia bent on fundamental change and a regime that appears to be backing away from its earlier reform activism. But there are other symptoms of the strains in Chinese society. These include:

- *Increases in worker protests and strikes.* In the first half of 1988, for example, there were [redacted] reported strikes [redacted] in an economy in which labor unrest officially cannot exist.
- *Serious friction between groups that have not benefited equally under reform.* Income disparities between individuals and regions have become a sensitive political issue.
- *A resurgence in the countryside of disputes over land and water rights, among other issues, and a revival, despite strong official discouragement, of traditional customs that betrays an opposition to change and a popular preference by some peasants for China's old mores.* Some of these, like elaborate weddings and funerals, are frowned on as wasteful; others, like the preference for male children, are discouraged because they reflect "feudal" attitudes that hinder modernization; and a few—such as certain millenarian cults—are seen as direct challenges to party authority.

Growing social disorder has slowed China's reform program by discrediting reform policies and providing ammunition to conservative critics of reform. [redacted]

[redacted] We believe these developments

marked a setback for reform policies. Ironically, over the long run the retreat from reform is likely to exacerbate tensions by denying the populace the economic gains to which they have grown accustomed during the last decade.

The management of these tensions is complicated by the fact that reform during the last decade has cost Beijing many of its traditional levers of control. For example, increased local autonomy over financial matters, the decentralization of economic decision making, and a reduction in the number of inducements the party can offer—such as unique access to scarce consumer goods or a good job—have made it difficult for Beijing to smooth over the manifestations of social disorder by applying sanctions or offering rewards. This, and the government's inability to address the root causes of crime and corruption, has added to popular disaffection with the regime. Beijing's apparent impotence is one powerful factor in the party's loss of prestige, we believe, and challenges the party's legitimacy and ability to rule effectively over the long run.

Reformers will remain vulnerable to charges that their policies have weakened social discipline and given away party authority without installing other methods of handling social conflict.


Modernizing these institutions may take decades, however, suggesting China is headed for a long period of social unrest. Because the reformers lack the tools to ease discontent or substantially reduce corruption, the appeal of adopting more repressive measures to deal with the dissidents, unhappy workers, and students is likely to grow. At the very least, social disorder will make it increasingly difficult for reformers to carry out their policy agenda.

Although social disorder could preclude advancement of China's reform program, we do not believe any likely alternative leadership would seek to reverse the policy of opening to the outside. A more conservative leadership might seek to distance itself somewhat from the United States. Its policies would probably affect foreign investment negatively, as would heightened concern by foreign businessmen about stability and the new leadership's intentions.

With or without a new leadership, serious problems with social order could hamper Beijing's efforts to raise its international profile. Fears of the effects of instability on Chinese foreign policy making—still close to the

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surface in some countries — would reawaken. China would have fewer resources to devote to building its foreign image and influence. In an extreme case, a frustrated Chinese leadership might stir up antiforeign feelings to excuse its failures and divert attention from them. Although such a tactic would probably have limited success domestically, it would have negative effects on China's dealings with the West, which is the most likely scapegoat.



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## Contents

	Page
Key Judgments	iii
Scope Note	ix
Reactions to Reform	1
Symptoms of Social Disorder	1
Corruption	1
Crime	3
The Onset of the "Polish Disease," Chinese Style	4
Beijing's Deteriorating Instruments of Control	5
Dilemmas for the Reformers	7
The Hazard of Pushing Too Hard	7
The Hazard of Pushing Too Little	10
Short-Term Outlook	11
Is China Up to Modernization?	11
Impact on the West	12
Appendix	
A Sample of Social Tensions	13



# Scope Note

This paper was drafted before resolution of the siege of Beijing during May 1989. It is not intended to address the student revolt per se. Rather, it investigates the nature and scope of the social tensions with which China's leaders must deal, assesses the risk that those tensions will spawn further disorder, and examines the effect they have on leadership thinking and its policy directions. We define social tensions as encompassing not only such common indicators of popular discontent as strikes and demonstrations, but also signs of friction between social groups that have fared unequally under reform. We include in our examination not only those sources of tension that find expression in overt challenges to authority such as student protest demonstrations, but also those that pose a more subtle threat—in some cases because they provide a pretext for less reform-minded leaders to demand a retreat from reform.

[REDACTED]

That social tension has risen to dangerous levels was amply demonstrated by the breakdown in order in Beijing in May 1989 and massive protest in other Chinese cities.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

there had been a sea change in the social fabric in the last year or so.

[REDACTED]

## Perspectives on Growing Social Tension in China

### Reactions to Reform

Rising corruption and crime, friction over income disparities, intellectual dissidence, increased rural violence, and widespread resistance—occasionally violent—to government directives all testify to increasing strains in China's social fabric.

### Urban

workers have held demonstrations protesting wage and, in the case of the self-employed, tax policies. Fear of inflation has sparked not only protests but also waves of panic buying and hoarding that, according to Chinese press accounts, are the worst in 40 years.

The most vivid recent example of social unrest is the wave of student protests in Beijing and several other cities following the death of reform leader Hu Yaobang in April and May 1989. Using Hu's death as a pretext, students staged several weeks of peaceful, but illegal, demonstrations. Posters appeared demanding more reform, especially political freedom and greater transparency in government, including publicizing leaders' financial records. In Beijing, workers signed a petition supporting the students, and on several occasions large crowds of onlookers cheered the students' actions—most notably when some students made an attempt to enter the guarded compound where top leaders live and work.

Even before the recent demonstrations, there was growing evidence that social disorder was slowing China's reform program. Despite repeated announcements over the past five years that it was about to tackle price reform, for example, Beijing has made little progress toward this goal.

### Symptoms of Social Disorder

#### Corruption

Pervasive corruption has emerged as perhaps the most sensitive source of popular disaffection, and it was foremost among the complaints of Beijing's student protesters.

The issue cuts across rural-urban lines in a way that other issues, such as inflation, do not. For example, higher food prices benefit peasants, and press reports indicate that peasants blame increases for many of the urban-produced items they buy—such as fertilizer—more on corruption than on inflation in the economy.

Greater opportunities to acquire and spend money—opportunities absent in prereform days—have led to an explosion in corrupt practices such as bribery, extortion, and black-marketeering, according to press reporting. One recent article quoted a black-marketeer complaining, ironically, that the cost of greasing palms was cutting into his profits.



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once scrupulously correct  
officials now are not only soliciting bribes but are also  
even specifying what the bribe should be.

As business activity has increased with economic  
growth, local officials have resurrected a host of  
traditional means of raking money off the top by

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imposing nonexistent taxes for business licenses, transport, and the like. In April 1988 angry peasants dumped 5,000 kilograms of spoiled milk into a county government building after authorities ignored their pleas for protection against local village officials who had imposed an illegal toll of some \$27,000. In another province farmers rioted and took fertilizer from state storehouses when they discovered that a local official had diverted fertilizer supplies to his family. Numerous press articles complain that the net effect of such corrupt practices has often been to stymie local economic initiative and even force promising enterprises into bankruptcy—thus imperiling reform implementation.

Corruption is not confined to the lower levels of the party and government.

Perhaps no form of corruption is more pervasive or difficult to eradicate than nepotism, a practice well entrenched in Chinese society.

Indeed, one of the reasons we believe party elders turned on the late former party General Secretary Hu Yaobang in 1986 was that he went after members of their families for corruption. The growth of corruption, we believe, feeds public cynicism and apathy, weakening faith in and support for reform and reform leaders. Comments by both ordinary Chinese and intellectuals reflect growing doubts about the party's ability to rid itself of the corrupt.

#### Crime

China has experienced a sharp upswing in crime over the past few years. According to Chinese Government data, the number of major cases, such as murder and armed robbery, increased in 1988 by 66 percent over the 1987 level. Even more worrisome to officials is the increase in the proportion of crime committed by juveniles—from 31 percent in 1976 to over 60 percent in 1988. Beijing has reacted by launching another of

its periodic anticrime campaigns; in September 1988, there were 8,000 arrests and a rash of public sentencing rallies and executions. We have detected little evidence that the campaign is having much effect. The authorities' apparent inability to halt the rise in crime is another cause of popular disenchantment and, we believe, evidence of slipping social control. In our view, worsening crime and corruption result, in part, from the appearance of a class of disenfranchised people—many of them unemployed workers or peasants whom the dislocations of reform have brought to the city—who see themselves as having missed out on reform's benefits.

Security officials and some party leaders have blamed the growth in crime on reform policies—especially the opening to the outside, the loosening of controls on internal travel, and the encouragement of private economic activity.

Feeling the heat from criticism about the crime rate, reformers have felt compelled to approve repressive measures to show they are "tough on crime," which tends to alarm and alienate some supporters. China's legal code is vague, and its court system—which does not exercise control over the police and other security organs—is new and weak. Security forces, therefore, have capitalized on crime crackdowns in order to stretch the definition of crime—especially economic crime—and to enhance their own power and discourage reform initiatives, such as the layoff of surplus workers, which they fear pose a threat to public safety.

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Growing income disparities, especially in the countryside, have sparked numerous attacks by mobs on prosperous farmers and their property, and the resentment is spreading to urban areas.

[REDACTED] we believe the idea that "property is theft" still has many adherents in China. We expect such tensions to increase as income disparities grow and new de facto class differences emerge.

The Chinese media have publicized the creation of SWAT teams, probably as a warning to potential protesters. In October 1988 the State Council took the extraordinary step of ordering police into some factories to help protect managers against angry workers.

#### The Onset of the "Polish Disease," Chinese Style

The foremost worry for China's leaders is probably what they perceive as the "Polish disease"—urban discontent and a possible marriage of political convenience between workers and students of the sort that has occurred in Poland in recent years and shaken the leadership in Warsaw. Although 80 percent of China's population lives in the countryside, the cities are more sensitive politically because it is easier for discontented urbanites to express their dissatisfaction actively. Besides a concentrated population, many cities have an articulate core of dissidents whose protests can furnish a catalyst for workers—even when workers' complaints are quite different—and who can provide leadership and organization.

Perhaps nothing worries reform leaders more, in our judgment, than such protests spiraling out of control and igniting wider unrest.

[REDACTED] This sensitivity, in our judgment, reflects fears that demonstrations could mushroom as they did in 1986 and again in April and May 1989, when a large number of workers joined students in the streets.

[REDACTED] There are other, longer term sources of tension between Beijing and the workers. Although workers benefited from early reforms, many feel threatened by recent reforms that were designed to increase industrial efficiency and productivity by ending guaranteed lifetime employment, trimming bloated factory work forces, tying wages to productivity, and closing state enterprises that chronically operate at a loss.

[REDACTED] Not surprisingly, efforts to increase productivity under these circumstances have triggered friction between factory managers and workers.

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Figure 2. Police grab student protester in 1986 (left); student leader Wuerkaixi in April 1989 (right)

Fang Lizhi, the Chinese counterpart to Soviet dissident Andrei Sakharov, has become a particular thorn in the reformers' side. His speeches on university campuses, calling for multiparty democracy, helped ignite the massive student demonstrations in 1986 that touched off a backlash and contributed to General Secretary Hu Yaobang's downfall and the campaign against "bourgeois liberalism." More recently, according to press accounts, Fang embarrassed Beijing while visiting Hong Kong by criticizing the corrupt activities of the children of some of China's top leaders—prompting authorities to revoke his travel rights, at least temporarily.

#### Beijing's Deteriorating Instruments of Control

Complicating the rise of corruption, crime, worker unrest, and student activism is the fact that reform has brought about changes that have undermined party control and weakened the party's ability to manage social tensions. Agricultural reforms, for example, have resulted in a decline in the number and power of rural cadres, leaving the party with fewer and less direct economic levers over the peasantry. Reform-sponsored devolution of power to local officials and businessmen has led to "economic warlordism" as localities have become increasingly independent of, and unresponsive to, central authorities. Urban party officials have also lost some influence over job and housing assignments, wages, and travel, which they have traditionally manipulated to encourage compliance. In effect, the party finds itself with fewer carrots and only big sticks to use.

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### *China and Other Communist States—Some Differences*

*Unlike Eastern Europe's ruling parties, the Chinese Communist Party has not had to contend with a challenge to its authority by any well-organized group like Solidarity, nor has it been split by major ethnic divisions the way Yugoslavia has. Nor does China face the kind of threat to its internal stability from separatist nationalist groups that the Soviet Union does. China's minorities—including Tibetans, Uighurs, Mongols, and more than 50 others—are too few and isolated to pose a serious threat; they make up only about 5 percent of the population. The party does not have to compete with any established organization that could serve as a rallying point, as the Catholic Church has done in Poland. The only exception is the Buddhist priesthood in Tibet, which receives support and encouragement from the Dalai Lama's government-in-exile in India. Although periodic outbreaks of violence among minorities are likely to continue, we believe there is near unanimity among the leadership, and thus the issue, while troublesome, is not politically threatening.*

*China's small intellectual elite has been perhaps the most important and certainly the most vocal source of dissent during the past decade. In the late 1970s, during China's so-called democracy-wall period, a*

*loosely knit movement of intellectuals and workers pressed the party to introduce political reforms and greater personal freedoms, but Deng Xiaoping crushed the movement after it had served his political purposes. More recently, students and intellectuals have pushed for broad changes, and there have been major student demonstrations almost annually since 1985.*

*Neither the democracy-wall critics nor later dissidents, however, have been particularly well organized. Chinese security services have been very effective at identifying leaders and intimidating dissidents, especially among the students. Despite widespread discontent, urban workers have not tried to organize a labor movement like Solidarity to rival the official unions. As a consequence, labor unrest has so far been limited to sporadic, scattered strikes and work slowdowns that, while worrying to the leadership, lacks the politically threatening content of its Polish counterpart.*

*We believe the opening up of Chinese society—intended to win popular support for reform—has made it more difficult for Beijing to use coercion to impose its will. Over the past few years people have demonstrated a greater tendency to resist such pressure, for example, by appealing to newspapers or higher level officials and using the banner of reform to make their case. To reformers' chagrin, intellectuals, whose status Deng Xiaoping and other reform leaders have sought to enhance, have become more critical not only of party ideologues but also of the reform leadership and its policies as well. Slipping central control is evident in students' defiance of explicit prohibitions against demonstrations, for example.*

*Further, the party no longer commands the moral authority it once did. In our judgment, the Cultural Revolution has left a legacy of bitterness and disillusionment with the party and Communist ideology that reformers have not been able to overcome. Despite reform, we believe the party's legitimacy has been so corroded over the past few years by corruption, inept management, and abuses of privilege that the traditional tools of exhortation and persuasion have lost much of their force.*

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### *China's Intellectuals—Questioning Time-Honored Truths*

*In the freer intellectual atmosphere under reform, China's intellectuals have begun to ask, and to discuss publicly, a number of interesting, disturbing, and—to some in the regime—potentially threatening questions. After the initial burst of enthusiasm, reform's shortcomings, China's continuing massive problems, rising expectations, and the impatience of intellectuals have all combined to create a mood of introspection and questioning.*

*One question that stubbornly reappears is whether Marxism is any longer an appropriate philosophy for China. Taking reform rhetoric about adapting to present circumstances a step further than even most reformist party leaders feel comfortable with, younger intellectuals have raised the question about whether China should simply admit that Communism has had its day. Some of these radicals look to capitalism and democracy, some propose a search for a socialist solution in words that echo the reform slogan "socialism with Chinese characteristics," but what they have in common is a rejection of the political forms of Communism and the state-centered economic model inherited from the Soviet Union.*

*Other intellectuals are asking whether China's difficulties stem not just from misguided Communism, but rather from flaws in Chinese culture. A recent*

*television series, "River Elegy," explored this theme, using the Yellow River as a metaphor for Chinese culture, and struck a responsive chord among many Chinese who, it seems to us, are hungry for answers to the questions the program raised. It also precipitated strong but contradictory reactions from Chinese leaders. Zhao praised it, for example, while party elder Wang Zhen was so incensed by it he succeeded in getting it temporarily banned.*

*The series dramatically argues that traditional Chinese culture remains a serious obstacle to China's modernization and calls for a change in viewpoint. Over images of the river and the sea, the piece calls for China to abandon its continental, inward-looking past and open up to the world, modernize its political structure and cultural concepts, and embrace such Western ideas as capitalism. Implicitly, the series attacks 40 years of Communist rule for failing to free China of its past. "River Elegy" is perhaps the most striking and poetic expression of the dissatisfactions and doubts of many Chinese as their country enters its second decade of reform.*

*government officials—are increasingly willing to ignore, resist, or even challenge central policy.*

*press articles, and even published Chinese opinion polls indicate that many people no longer believe the party's promises, are cynical about the intentions of many party leaders, and doubt the ability of those leaders they do trust to deliver. People—including party cadres and*

### *Dilemmas for the Reformers*

#### *The Hazard of Pushing Too Hard*

*On top of the problems of overhauling China's socialist system, Chinese reformers must also deal with the challenge of modernizing a poor, backward, and in*

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Figure 3. Fang Lizhi, one of China's leading dissidents; in March 1989, Fang led a petition drive to get amnesty for political prisoners in China.

many areas still very traditional Third World society. We believe that many in the leadership recognize that this process is difficult and dangerous.

Some reform policies clash head-on with traditional values. Strong cultural factors, as well as economic pressures, operate against efforts to control the population, for example, or to legislate improvements in the status of women. As peasants have become wealthy enough to pay the fines, many have simply ignored family-size restrictions or have resorted to a variety of stratagems to have more children—including bribing local family planning officials or having a child outside their home district. Local officials in

some areas who have been too zealous in enforcing the policy have been beaten or even murdered. Although reform leaders recognize the obvious consequences of this policy's failing, they have had no choice over the past few years but to relax restrictions in rural areas because they have proved unenforceable.

Party leaders regularly denounce these traditional attitudes as "feudal." The Sixth Plenum document on ideology in 1986 devoted considerable space to attacking them—a measure of the frustration within the leadership over the impediment traditionalism continues to pose to the modernization drive. But thus far the onslaught on traditional values appears to have generated more resentment than anything else. Paradoxically, some reforms have actually contributed to a resurgence of traditional practices—some are relatively innocuous, such as lavish spending on funerals and weddings, but others pose more serious threats to reform goals and social stability (see inset).

One traditional criterion for deciding what group should control local resources—lineage—figured in a confrontation in the early 1980s, when 600 police and soldiers had to be sent in to break up fighting between two clans in south China; the clans had even fortified and provisioned their villages. Local party cadres were ringleaders in the dispute, which probably centered on land and water rights. This kind of rural violence was once common in traditional society and—although comprehensive information on such events is hard to come by—seems to be on the rise, a result, in large part, of the growth in economic competition after the dismantling of the communes.

This resurgence of "feudalism" has not only become a source of some embarrassment to reform leaders but also provides ammunition for critics seeking to reimpose tighter controls and ideological education on the population. Arguments over how much freedom to allow under reform, in our judgment, have been—and remain—at the core of many differences between reform activists and more orthodox party leaders, and have figured prominently in the political infighting in Beijing since Deng began his reforms.

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### *The Persistence of Traditional Ways*

*The strength of premodern attitudes demonstrates the huge task modernizers face in China. Numerous studies of the modernization process have pointed to the severe tensions generated when a society tries to cast off tradition.*

*The potential dangers are far more difficult to document than those of inflation, but the threat in this kind of social tension is real, in our opinion, and harder to manage.*

*Some customs that linger are relatively benign. Lavish weddings and funerals, although decried as wasteful, do not seriously threaten the reform program. They do, however, provide an avenue for corruption in the form of "donations" to weddings or funerals in well-connected families. A related practice, building tombs, not only uses up scarce land but can also lead to violence as villages or individuals contend for especially auspicious sites. Perhaps equally important, the popularity of such folkways is taken by some leaders as an affront to socialist values and as resistance to the scientific outlook that socialism claims for its own.*

*Other cultural legacies pose a more direct threat to central goals, and, in some cases, even a challenge to official authority. A case in point is the traditional attitude toward women and children. According to Chinese press, there have been at least two well-organized rings trading in women. This went beyond*

*prostitution to the actual selling—in at least one case, in a village market with local official approval—of women as servants or wives. There have been numerous cases of selling children as well, and in poor areas female infanticide still occurs. Beijing has tried to stop such practices through legal penalties and education, but in many areas we believe that these efforts have failed.*

*Chinese leaders are also much concerned about the resurgence of superstition. At various times the press has tried to explain the difference between religion and superstition, but the operative difference seems to be whether the activities are seen as a threat to either production or social order. For instance, people claiming to be reincarnations of mythical figures such as the Queen of the Western Heaven, returned to Earth to establish a new order, have been executed as counterrevolutionaries. Mindful of China's long history of peasant rebellions led by such messianic figures, Beijing does not treat these incidents lightly.*

*Academic research and press evidence indicate that localism, sometimes based on clan identity, has strengthened since reform. Echoes of the past, like crop-protection societies—groups of vigilantes organized to protect fields from looting—have reappeared, and intervillage clashes are on the rise.*

*Reformers rebut these arguments by saying that the policies of the past are proven failures. Within reformist circles, a number of proposals have been floated to address some of the most serious problems, but so far no coherent approach has emerged and results are mixed at best. For example, some support the establishment of a social insurance system independent of the factories as a way of reducing worker fears of unemployment and, thus, resistance to labor reform. Funding it, however, remains a huge problem, and, therefore, some advisers hold that the establishment of*

*an efficient tax system, perhaps combined with ownership reform, should come first.*

*To reduce corruption, reformist political theorists have been trying to design an effective, and at least somewhat independent, legal system to prosecute officials. Other reformist thinkers see price reform—which would end the two-tier price system that fosters*

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Figure 4. Traditional folk religion survives despite official discouragement. An ancestor priest prepares for a funeral (left) and a woman worships her ancestors (right).

the black market—as primary. While most reformers accept that all of these policies are desirable, there is considerable confusion over priorities. As long as the drift continues, reformers will remain vulnerable to charges of failing to control the bad effects of their programs.

#### The Hazard of Pushing Too Little

Damned if they push too hard, reformers are also damned if insufficient results generate widespread disappointment among a population now used to the benefits of economic growth. Even though most Chinese are better off today than 10 years ago, a variety of press articles suggest they now expect continued improvements. However, gains have leveled off and, in some cases, have even been lost. Chinese officials acknowledged in July 1988 that the standard of living of over 20 percent of the urban population had dropped over the year because of

rising inflation—itsself fueled, in part, by reformers' promotion of high-growth policies—and urban protests evoked memories of the results of the hyperinflation of the 1940s that helped end Nationalist rule in China. The authorities moved quickly to rein in prices and reassure city dwellers, and their actions have had some calming effect.

In some cases, moreover, people have come to resent what they perceive as inequities in reform. Urban workers, reacting to stories in the press about wealthy peasants building houses, for example, grumble that they—the proletariat upon whom the revolution is theoretically based—are suffering while peasants get rich. In fact, Chinese academic research shows that the urban-rural income disparity is actually greater

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now, at 2.33:1, than it was in 1981. What is important politically, however, is not the fact but the perception that reform is not benefiting urban residents. One recent poll found a persistent belief that "reform has only benefited peddlers." A dropoff in urban support for reform threatens to deprive its advocates of one of their most powerful arguments for moving forward.

#### Short-Term Outlook

In recent months the leadership has at critical points adopted a cautious, go-slow approach to reform because of popular discontent. In [redacted] public speeches numerous leaders expressed the fear that stability is at risk. Obviously these worries are now both more intense and more generally shared than ever before; the urgency with which Beijing has sought to quell inflation, assuage outrage over corruption, and boost security measures has been an expression of these fears.

Beijing reacted to the threat of disorder first of all by retreating from some of the more controversial reforms, especially price reform—which would entail a jump in prices. After the events of the summer of 1988, a media campaign sought to reassure Chinese, especially city dwellers, that they would be shielded from the worst effects of inflation. According to [redacted] press reports, the authorities are now planning wage hikes, increased subsidies, and a two-year moratorium on raising prices of key goods in response to the protests over inflation. Liberalizing press laws and increasing the use of local people's congresses as soundingboards for popular concerns—steps reformers have been pushing—could help vent public frustrations.

Using popular discontent as a lever, other reformers may push to open the political system further, giving people a greater sense of participation and, thus, a stake in reform.

#### Is China Up to Modernization?

In our view, however, the leadership faces a rough and potentially lengthy period of instability. Student protests have occurred annually since 1985, and the creation of stronger student organizations suggests they are almost certain to resurface in the future. The sour mood of urban workers is likely to worsen as their living standards slip. Discontent among peasant farmers and rural enterprise workers, who stand to be hurt by Beijing's current austerity policies, may also increase. Unless Beijing can curb inflation and sustain rapid economic growth—which is doubtful—it will probably have to contend with increasing worker protests and strikes, new student protests, and sporadic outbreaks of violence.

We are not optimistic that the leadership can agree on a course of action that would ameliorate economic problems, or even has the political will to take on the powerful vested interests that would oppose recentralizing authority. Provincial leaders are unlikely to voluntarily give up the enormous power Beijing has granted them over the past decade. And we expect local party cadres to do little more than pay lip service to Beijing's campaign against corruption. Urban workers, in our judgment, are also likely to resist any government attempt to impose a ceiling on wages and bonuses.

We believe the most likely threat to reforms under these conditions is that continued intractable discontent, combined with pervasive disillusionment and widespread indifference and passive resistance to government initiatives, will weaken reformers' political position and provide ammunition to their opponents. Whether economic troubles undercut the reformers politically or force them to water down their program, severe social tensions are likely to become a permanent feature of the Chinese political landscape.

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China has a history, both under the Communists and before, of upheavals in reaction to social tensions. Even if the current turmoil subsided, bad judgment on the part of the leaders, perhaps combined with an event beyond their control such as a serious international recession, could trigger another upheaval.

#### Impact on the West

We consider it extremely unlikely that unrest in China would get so out of hand that it would bring in a leadership interested in returning to the isolationist policies of the past; the "open policy" is, we believe, a permanent part of all leaders' foreign policy. But it is conceivable that disorder could bring about a political realignment in China that would affect the interpretation of the policy. Many of the leaders whom we place on the more conservative side of the political spectrum share a distrust of Western ideas and intentions that, we believe, could lead them to seek greater distance from the United States. Under these leaders, military and diplomatic relations could cool, although the strength of Western technology, markets, and educational institutions would act as a brake on this tendency.

Under a more traditional leadership, changes in the economic climate could adversely affect trade and the investment picture for US firms. Li Peng, for example, has suggested instituting official controls on foreign investments to ensure that they are sufficiently favorable to China. Several of the more traditional leaders are lukewarm toward the strategy of coastal development that has fostered much of the foreign investment in China.

Measures taken to control disorder could also smother economic initiative. Their turbulent recent history has conditioned Chinese to see a clampdown in one area

as presaging more sweeping measures or even a policy reversal. A clampdown often leads to a slowdown in business activity.

A rise in social disorder would mean a decline in investment as foreign businessmen reacted to fears of instability. Unrest, especially in the cities where most investment is centered, would exacerbate what is already a difficult investment environment.

Persistent serious disturbances and the draconian measures China might take to clamp down on them could reawaken fears about China's stability and predictability that would hamper China's initiatives in the region. We judge it probable that some Southeast Asian states, such as Malaysia and Indonesia—which are already leery of Chinese intentions—would worry that China's problems might be transmitted to their ethnic Chinese populations.

It is conceivable that under extreme conditions a frustrated leadership could deliberately stir up xenophobia both to distract the populace and to transfer blame for China's problems. Chinese complaints that foreigners have incited trouble in Tibet and have encouraged Chinese dissidents such as Fang Lizhi exemplify this tendency. Although we doubt that such a strategy would be very effective or persuasive today—particularly in diverting attention from domestic problems—that would not necessarily prevent it from affecting China's foreign relations.

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## Appendix

### A Sampler of Social Tensions

The list below is not exhaustive but is intended to give a sampling of incidents reflecting social tensions.

1988

**March**

As many as 2,000 people riot in Lhasa during religious festival.

**April**

Authorities arrest a Daoist "witch" in Shenyang for inciting her followers to murder.

Hundreds of workers attack passenger train in Guangdong.

Peasants in Hunan push 50 carts of vegetables into municipal government building, protesting broken contracts.

**May**

Mob of Guangdong peasants storms public security bureau, freeing prisoners and burning files.

Two hundred persons in Henan attack a court, beating up 17 police officers.

**June**

Local authorities move against pirates on the coast of Zhejiang Province.

Students demonstrate at Beijing University for political change.

Police break up a ring of 66 people involved in kidnapping young girls and selling them into slavery; peasants who purchased one girl object that they used legitimately earned money to buy her and, therefore, should not have to give her up.

Soccer riot in Sichuan erupts, police take eight hours to restore order.

Thousands of armed police break up demonstration by 1,000 peasants protesting pollution of water supply for their fields.

Xi'an taxi drivers parade against corruption and discrimination against private operators.

Strike in Liaoning results in removal of incompetent factory manager.

**July**

Mob in Guangdong attacks tax collectors sent to inspect local jewelry shops.

Public security Vice Minister cites rise in ethnic clashes and smuggling in border regions.

More than 100 intellectuals attend meeting criticizing limited political and intellectual freedoms and call for rehabilitation of Hu Yaobang.

Security guard kills family-planning official who penalized him for having too many children.

**August**

Spending sprees, hoarding, bank runs, and protests against inflation force change in economic policy at leadership meetings.

Four farmers are killed when police intervene to break up attack by farmers on local land office.

**September**

Land dispute between local peasants and mining enterprise in Liaoning halts production.

Liaoning paper claims illegal "taxes" force closure of 14,000 small businesses.



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[REDACTED]

The Chinese People's Political Consultative Committee Women's Committee reveals evidence of widespread female slavery, including involvement of village committees in approving contracts.

[REDACTED]

**December**

Protests by Tibetan dissidents in Lhasa and Beijing.

Students at several campuses demonstrate against African students and special privileges for foreign students.

Enraged depositors attack post offices in several areas after being denied cash withdrawals because of new money-tightening measures ordered by Beijing.

**1989**

**January**

Clash between grain farmers and Anhui provincial officials attempting to block export of grain to wealthier coastal provinces leaves one farmer dead, two officials injured.

**February**

Group of prominent intellectuals sign letter calling for amnesty for political prisoners.

Homemade bomb reportedly explodes on train in Henan, kills 12.

**March**

Massive proindependence demonstrations in Tibet lead to imposition of martial law there.

**April**

Student demonstrations, beginning with the death of Hu Yaobang on the 15th, continue for a month. Protests in Beijing bring 150,000 students to the streets; other demonstrations occur throughout China.

Police arrest more than 50 members of a "counterrevolutionary" sect called the "Universal Sycee Dynasty." The group claimed to be followers of the founder of the Ming dynasty and planned to establish a new kingdom.

**May**

Student demonstrations continue.

Reporters, including from the official *People's Daily*, present a petition protesting controls on their ability to report the demonstrations accurately, call for press freedom.

Martial law is required to restore order to Beijing.

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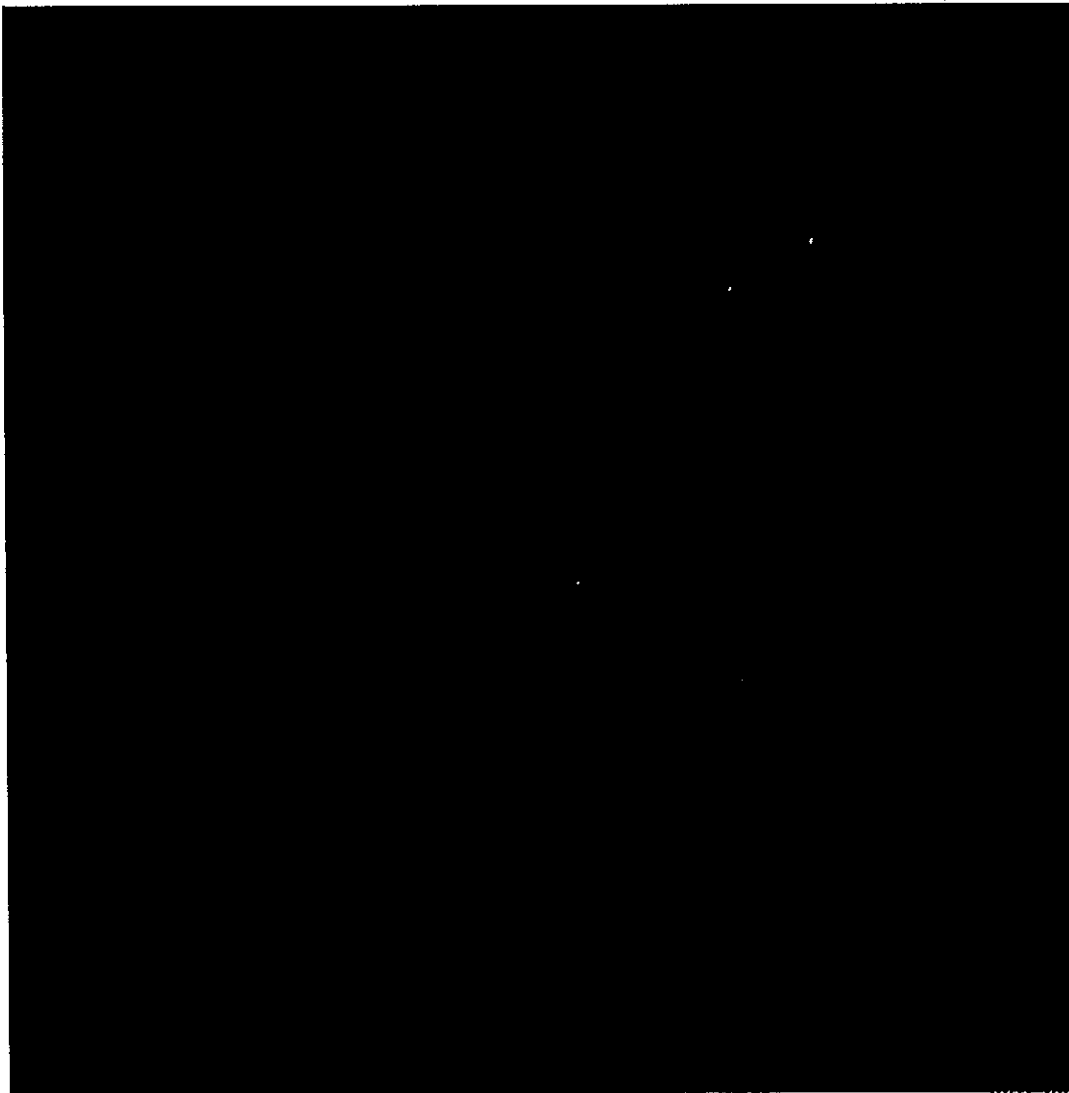
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**Contents**

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**China: Situation Report**

1

2

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**Notes**

---

**In Brief**

---

**Special Analyses**

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## CHINA:

## Situation Report

New Leadership  
Lineup

Deng Xiaoping has met publicly with military officers to express deep condolences over the loss of military "martyrs" and to congratulate them for successfully suppressing a "counterrevolutionary rebellion." Other top leaders present at yesterday's televised session were President Yang Shangkun, Premier Li Peng, Defense Minister Qin Jiwei, Politburo member Qiao Shi, National People's Congress Chairman Wan Li, and several of China's octogenarian hardliners. Zhao Ziyang and Politburo member Hu Qili were absent. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Comment: The appearance of Deng and the new leadership indicates they are now confident of their ability to remain in power. Although Deng chaired the meeting, the status of his health is uncertain; he may now be sharing power with Yang, party elders, and other military leaders who supported the crackdown. As a result of the upheavals, the military has become an influential player in Chinese politics, and the military's share of the state budget may increase markedly as the price of its support. [REDACTED]

The propaganda line taken indicates the regime hopes to convince the populace that the Army acted in self-defense. With Beijing firmly under control, the military may have decided to return the 1st Tank Division to its garrison to give the capital an air of normalcy. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

## Detaining Suspects

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

continued

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The Public Security Bureau announced yesterday that students on Beijing campuses have 48 hours to turn themselves in and confess membership in the independent student union. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Beijing University has hurriedly declared the start of summer vacation a month early. [REDACTED]

In Shanghai, an estimated 150,000 demonstrators have held a peaceful memorial march; student leaders there escalated their demands yesterday, calling on the municipal government to lower flags to honor those who were killed in Beijing. Police in Shanghai are out in force today, [REDACTED]

Comment: [REDACTED]

The authorities probably hope to coerce frightened protesters into identifying each other in exchange for promises of leniency and thereby make it difficult to build an underground organization. Although a hard core of students may try to resist efforts to pacify the campuses, the departure of most students means continued resistance would be short lived. [REDACTED]

#### Diplomatic Activity

China's Foreign Ministry today issued a note advising diplomats in Beijing not to travel at night, apparently in an attempt to hide some of the extent of the crackdown. The note also warned that vehicles should only be used for diplomatic purposes because "safety cannot be guaranteed" otherwise; it added that armed squads will patrol in and around the embassy areas. Meanwhile, many Chinese diplomats overseas appear outraged at recent developments. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] A Chinese representative yesterday told a UNESCO meeting in Paris that he shares the concerns of foreigners over the killings in Tiananmen Square. [REDACTED]

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Central Intelligence Agency



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## DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

25 August 1989

China's Military: Fragile Unity in the Wake of Crisis [REDACTED]

## Summary

A comprehensive review of the events of this past spring indicates that China's paramount military leader Deng Xiaoping needed [REDACTED] to convince regional military commanders to intervene decisively and crush the prodemocracy movement in Beijing. The commanders' reluctance to act suggests that--despite statements of unity--there are deep divisions within the military and Deng can count on the undivided loyalty of very few officers. Deng appears unsure of his support and is moving to reassert his authority while President Yang Shangkun and Defense Minister Qin Jiwei vie to build their own bases of power in the military. [REDACTED]

We believe that the struggle for influence in the military will intensify and that it may be affecting Beijing's stance regarding the future of suspended FMS programs. President Yang Shangkun, for example, may view any compromise on China's part as undercutting his attempts to win

This memorandum was prepared by [REDACTED] Office of East Asian Analysis, and [REDACTED] Office of Leadership Analysis. Information available as of 24 August 1989 was used in its preparation. Comments and queries are welcome and may be directed to the Chief, [REDACTED] OEA, [REDACTED]

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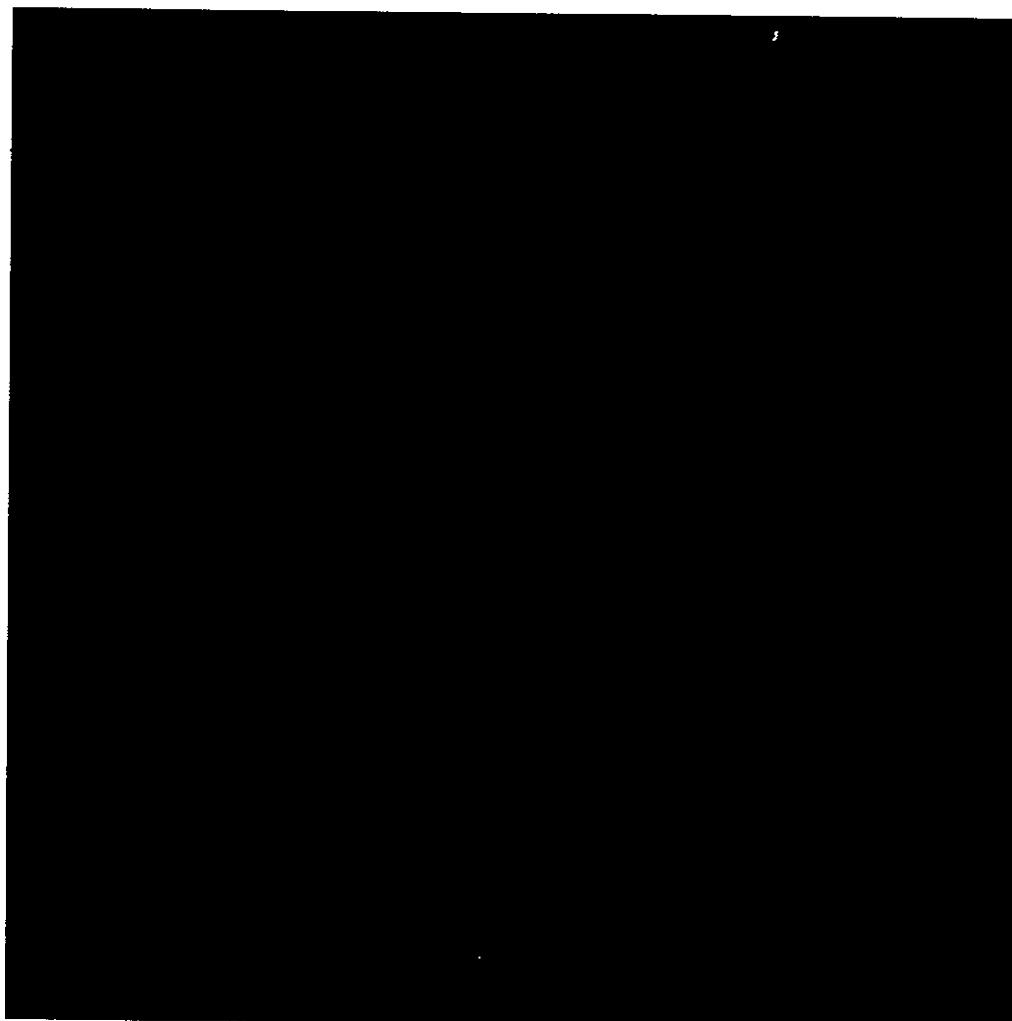
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support from hardliners. Deng Xiaoping, on the other hand, may believe  
his position requires a quick solution to the impasse with Washington.



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~~Secret Noform Nocontract Orcon~~**Motives for Balking .**

In our judgment, the reluctance of key military figures to support the imposition of martial law arose from one or more factors:

- The reluctance of regional commanders to reentangle the Army in domestic politics. Virtually all of the military region commanders were selected by Deng precisely because they are professional soldiers dedicated to military modernization and to reducing the overarching roles in political, social, and economic affairs that the People's Liberation Army assumed during the Cultural Revolution (1966-76). Military commanders also, in our judgment, understood that the use of the army as an instrument of social control in Beijing would almost certainly tarnish the Army's popular image and constitute an open-ended commitment to suppressing outbreaks of civil unrest in the future.
- A concern that the martial law declaration was a ploy by Premier Li Peng and President Yang Shangkun to stage a coup against General Secretary Zhao Ziyang. Yang's longstanding animosity for Zhao was well known in the military, which had seen him chafe at Zhao's appointment as the second-ranking member of the Military Affairs Commission--outranking Yang. Immediately following the imposition of martial law, numerous rumors circulating in the capital alleged that Deng had become mentally unstable, ill, or had even died. These rumors almost certainly fueled suspicions within the military that Yang and Li were manipulating the aging leader or issuing orders under his name.
- Uncertainty over the outcome of the leadership struggle between Zhao and Deng Xiaoping. As the antigovernment demonstrations grew, the battle for power between Deng and Zhao intensified.

[REDACTED] We believe that some commanders withheld full support until it became clear that Deng would retain control, and it was not until 3 June--after the politics of civilian leadership were sorted out--that the crackdown was implemented.

- The influence of leading active and retired military figures over military region commanders and the commanders of the General Staff and General Logistics Departments. Several key senior military figures [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] adamantly opposed the use of the military against the students. We think they balked either because they wanted to protect the Army's prestige, or because they supported Zhao and distrusted Yang Shangkun and Li Peng.

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~~Secret Not for Nocontract Orcon~~**Struggle for Control of the Guns**

Deng remains the keystone to military cohesion, but the fissures within the military evident during the crisis demonstrate that, despite recent statements of unity, he can count on the unqualified support of few military officers. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] In addition, Deng's absence from public view since 9 June--while not unprecedented--has sparked new speculation in China that age and increasing infirmity have diminished his control over the military. This perception almost certainly has intensified antagonisms engendered by the crackdown and fueled maneuvering among senior officers for positions of influence. [REDACTED]

Deng may have difficulty deciding which of the prime challengers to his influence--President Yang Shangkun or Defense Minister Qin Jiwei--represents the greater threat. He probably is most wary of President Yang, who is generally recognized as the second most powerful figure in China today. Yang is a formidable contender for the loyalties of the military--albeit with some definite liabilities. As Permanent Vice Chairman of the Military Affairs Commission, he exercises day-to-day control over the military. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Yang, moreover, apparently enjoys the support of elderly party hardliners and conservative military figures, many of whom have returned to prominence with the fall of Zhao. [REDACTED]

Although Yang has never been a combat commander, he is a shrewd political tactician. Yang, for example, never accepted Deng's appointment of Zhao to the Military Affairs Commission, and worked diligently to prevent Zhao from developing support within the armed services. Yang also is not blind to Deng's political machinations. [REDACTED]

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~~Secret Notum Nocontract Orcon~~**The Role of the Venerated Elders**

A group of aging and retired officers who command tremendous respect within China's defense community and who continue to advise the Military Affairs Commission (MAC) on national security affairs will play a major role in the struggle for influence. In our judgment, many of these officers oppose Yang Shangkun, and we expect they will use their prestige to undermine his authority. The most prominent of these senior opponents probably include:

Deputy Secretary General of the MAC Hong Xuezhi, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] A longtime Deng ally, Hong resurfaced shortly after the crackdown began and retains his post on the Commission.

Former Defense Minister Zhang Alping is widely respected in the defense science and technology community. [REDACTED]

Yang Dezhi, a former Chief of Staff, [REDACTED]

National Defense University Political Commissar Li Desheng oversees senior officer political training and may be another potent opponent of Yang Shangkun. Li served as commander of Shenyang Military Region for more than 12 years and almost certainly retains the loyalty of officers who served under him.<sup>5</sup> Li has never been a Yang supporter. [REDACTED]

<sup>5</sup> Among those who served in the Shenyang Military Region under Li are Lanzhou commander Zhao Xiangshun, Shenyang commander Liu Jingsong, Shenyang political commissar Song Keda, Beijing political commissar Liu Zhenhua, and Nanjing political commissar Fu Kuiqing. In addition, General Logistics Department director Zhao Nanqi also served under Li. [REDACTED]

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Yang Shangkun's central role in the Tiananmen crackdown, however, apparently is seen by his detractors as the Achilles heel of his political ascent. In the wake of the assault on Tiananmen Square, reports swept the capital that the 27th Group Army--allegedly commanded by Yang's nephew--was solely responsible for the bloodletting, and Yang's opponents are likely to keep these tales alive.<sup>3</sup> These allegations are almost certainly attempts by political opponents to tar the "Yang family" and rumors continue to abound that Yang will be forced into retirement because of his newly attained infamy. [REDACTED]

#### Combat Veteran Qin Jiwei

We believe Defense Minister Qin Jiwei is the most important rival to President Yang Shangkun's bid to secure the loyalties of the Chinese Army in anticipation of a succession struggle after Deng dies. [REDACTED]

According to the Hong Kong press, the Military Affairs Commission met in early August to nominate candidates for First Vice Chairman, a post vacated by the political demise of Zhao Ziyang. Defense Minister Qin allegedly led the opposition of some military region commanders to Yang's appointment, with Deng remaining noncommittal. After the meeting collapsed in heated argument, Qin and the commanders reportedly were detained by troops loyal to Yang. But Chinese television on 19 August showed Qin--along with Yang and most other senior leaders--at the funeral of a retired general, apparently belying rumors of the Defense Minister's arrest. [REDACTED]

Qin and Yang have long been at odds, and the feud intensified two years ago [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Qin almost certainly exercises enormous influence over the Beijing Military Region--which he commanded for eight years-- [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Qin has longstanding ties to Deng, however, and his reappearance in early June suggests Deng ordered his release to help balance Yang's growing influence. Chinese press coverage suggests Deng further bolstered Qin's stature last month by appointing him to the Standing Committee of the Military Affairs Commission. [REDACTED]

<sup>3</sup> Although the 27th Army did play a major role in the massacre in Beijing, elements of at least six other armies also contributed to the heavy civilian casualties. [REDACTED]

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~~Secret Notion Nocontract Orcon~~**US Foreign Military Sales to China**

The US suspension of military trade with China, enacted on 5 June, affected four ongoing FMS programs worth some \$600 million:

**F-8-II fighter avionics upgrade (\$502 million)**

The "Peace Pearl" program provides engineering support to integrate US flight control, radars, and weapons management equipment into Chinese interceptors. Beijing agreed to purchase 55 avionics packages with projected initial deliveries in 1992.

**Large Caliber Artillery Modernization Program (\$28 million)**

The United States is assisting Chinese artillery ammunition factories by providing improved manufacturing methods and transferring production capability for two types of US 155mm artillery fuses. One production line is already installed.

**AN/TPQ-37 Artillery Locating Radar (\$63 million)**

Two of the mobile radars--used to pinpoint enemy artillery positions--were delivered in May 1988 and are being used by the Chinese for familiarization and crew training. Two additional radars were scheduled to be delivered next year.



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China's civilian leadership is dominated by an uncertain coalition of mutually suspicious octogenarians--none of whom have enough political clout to attain supremacy. We judge that Deng is well aware that the battle for influence over the Chinese military has become critical, and we expect him to try to move decisively. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Wholesale changes in the military command structure would strongly signal that Deng is uncomfortable with Yang's strength and suspicious of support for Yang among party hardliners who have long opposed Deng's reform programs. Press accounts suggest that Deng is planning to abolish the post of First Vice Chairman of the Military Commission, or simply leave it unfilled, to end the bickering over who should receive the appointment. [REDACTED]

Even if Deng is able to effect the changes, we expect the jockeying for influence in the military to intensify. Deng's physical frailty and his political vulnerability in the wake of the crackdown have led political and military leaders to question his authority and right to lead China. Moreover, the abolition of the First Vice Chairmanship could galvanize behind Qin Jiwei, at least temporarily, those in the party and military opposed to Yang Shangkun. Yang, as Permanent Vice Chairman, is the de facto successor to Deng on the Military Affairs Commission unless other changes are implemented. Regional military commanders are important players in these struggles and--even if loyal to Deng today--would be subject to heavy lobbying in Beijing as party and military leaders maneuver in anticipation of Deng's death or incapacitation. Alliances formed, however, are likely to be highly fragile and secretive as individual commanders try to anticipate who will win the party struggles in Beijing--some may pledge loyalty and then simply choose to sit out the political battles. [REDACTED]

**Implications for the United States**

The dynamics of the struggle for influence in the military are almost certain to complicate Sino-US relations. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the current dispute over the future of US Foreign Military Sales programs with China is probably compounded by the domestic infighting. Yang Shangkun, for example, has traditionally shown strong support for Sino-US military ties. But--at a time when he is trying to strengthen his political position--he may well wish to burnish his hardline credentials by taking a tough

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stance against yielding any ground to the United States on the suspension of US military transfer programs. [REDACTED]

By contrast, Deng and perhaps Defense Minister Qin Jiwei may see advantage in quickly salvaging US-China military relations. Deng has found limited military links with the United States an extremely useful counterweight to Moscow and may calculate that China's leverage with Gorbachyov will diminish if FMS programs collapse. He may also believe that the demise of FMS cooperation would make it almost impossible to renew Sino-US military ties in the future, because hardliners would portray Washington's actions as reminiscent of the abrupt cutoff of Soviet military assistance in the early 1960s. [REDACTED]

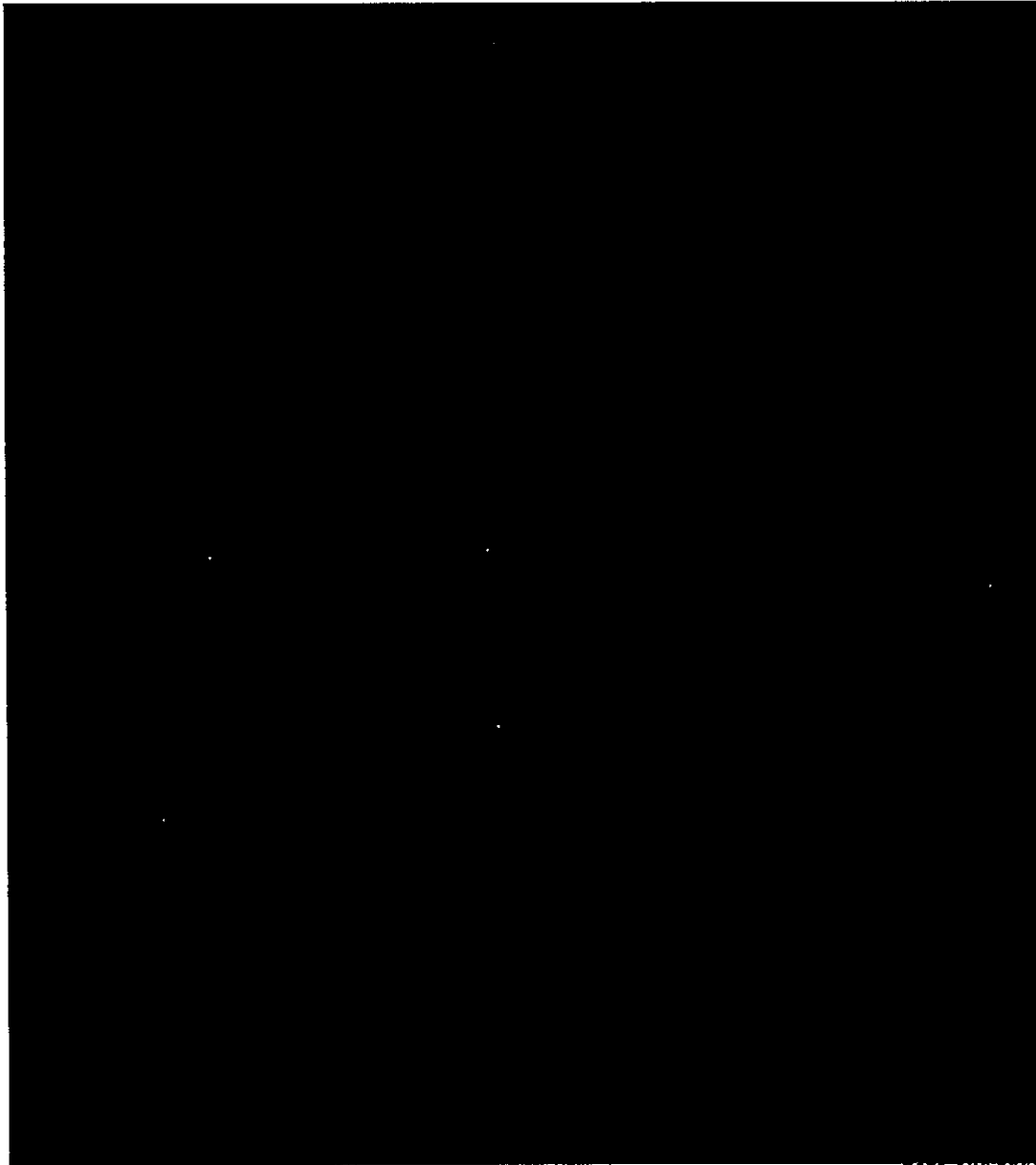
Deng may also calculate that hardliners would use the failure to reach agreement as an example of Deng's flawed policy decisions. We expect some hardliners would argue that Deng made a major error in reliance on the United States, in the first place, for modernization of China's fighter aircraft and might move to manipulate the issue to weaken support for Deng within the military. Hardliners are already blaming the United States for the rise of the prodemocracy movement and attacking Zhao Ziyang and the reformers for being enamored with Western thoughts and achievements. They almost certainly would step up their attempts to have a reconsideration of China's tilt toward the West. With the FMS issue prominent at this critical juncture in Chinese domestic politics, the United States is likely to find that tentative agreements unravel easily and Beijing lashes out harshly and in ways that appear excessive. [REDACTED]

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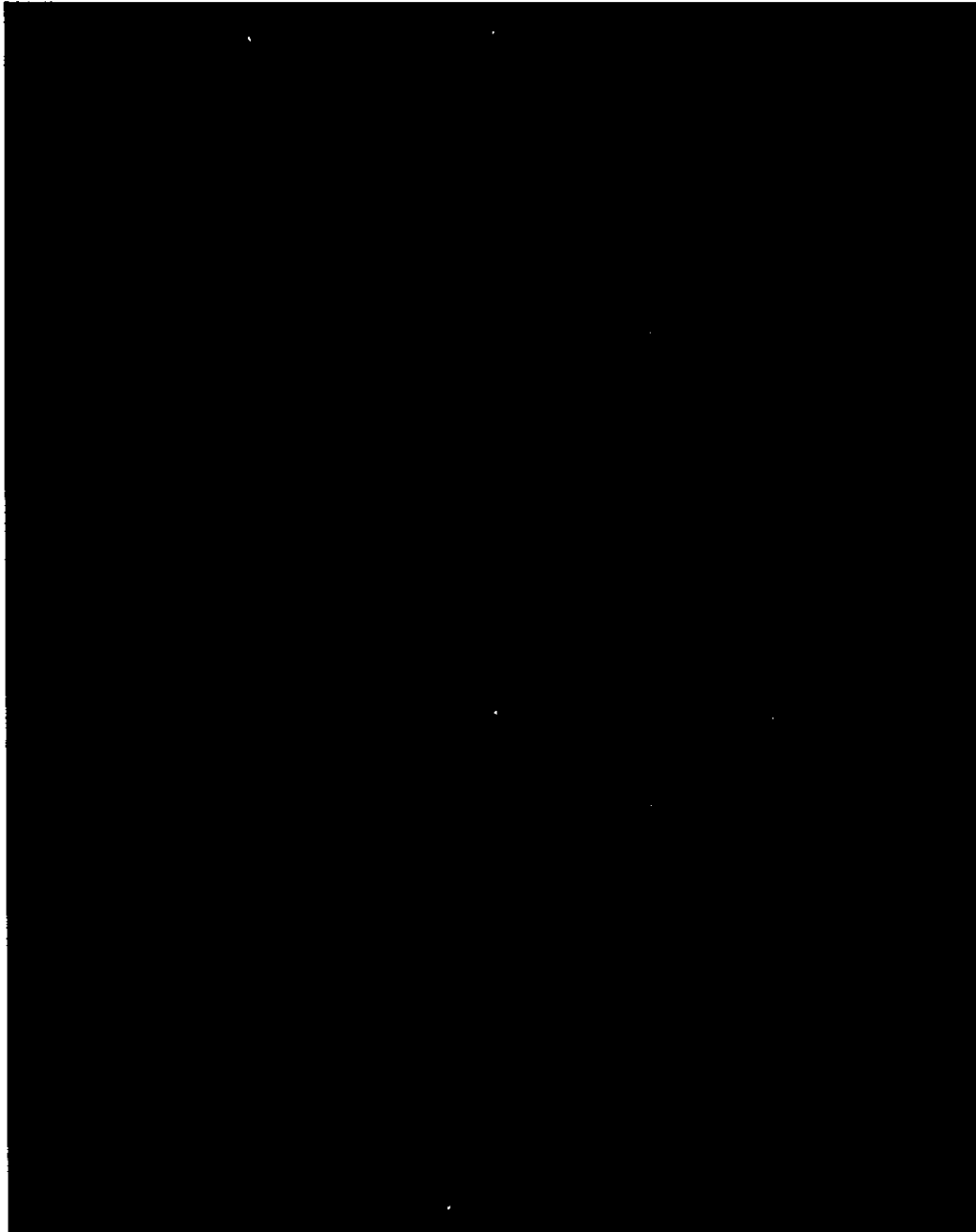


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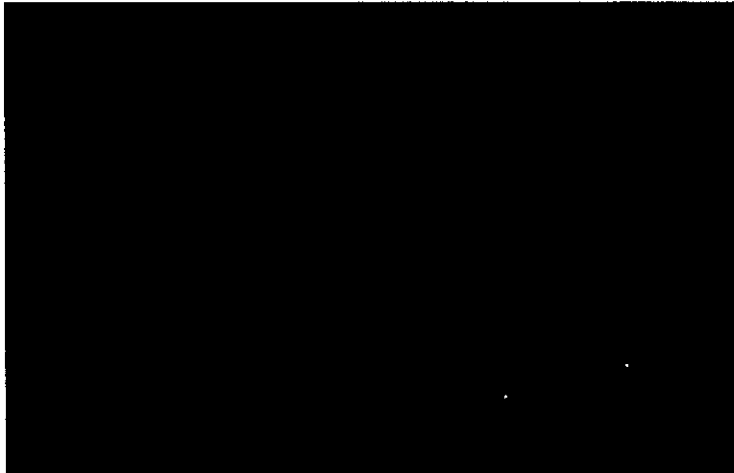


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# The Road to the Tiananmen Crackdown: An Analytic Chronology of Chinese Leadership Decision Making

A Research Paper



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**The Road to the Tiananmen  
Crackdown: An Analytic  
Chronology of Chinese  
Leadership Decision Making** [REDACTED]

**Scope Note**

*Information available  
as of 29 August 1989  
was used in this report.*

This paper provides a baseline analytic chronology of the Chinese leadership's decisionmaking between the death of Hu Yaobang on 15 April 1989 and the ouster of General Secretary Zhao Ziyang at the 4th Plenum of the party Central Committee on 23-24 June 1989. It is not an attempt to look beyond the watershed events of April-June or assess their significance [REDACTED] but is an effort to preserve what happened in one document. [REDACTED]

The paper also identifies the major players, the methods they used in assuring support, and the critical decision points in the leadership's handling of the simultaneous crises within its own ranks and on Tiananmen Square. Events in the provinces, troop movements, the actions of the student-led demonstrators in the square, and foreign reactions are introduced only to give context to the leadership's actions. [REDACTED]

The paper draws mainly from accounts in the Chinese and Hong Kong press, which both sides in the leadership struggle used to explain their actions and rally support for their respective positions. [REDACTED]

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**The Road to the Tiananmen  
Crackdown: An Analytic  
Chronology of Chinese  
Leadership Decision Making**

**Summary**

Chinese leadership decisions leading up to the crackdown on prodemocracy demonstrations and the subsequent purge by Deng Xiaoping and other party hardliners of the demonstrators' supporters appear to have gone through four major phases:

- From 15 to 26 April, the regime tried intimidation, making statements and publishing editorials that were so provocative, they fueled rather than cooled the demonstrations.
- From 26 April to 20 May, then party General Secretary Zhao Ziyang tried to soften the regime's tactics, causing an irreparable split between Zhao and the hardliners.
- The hardliners regained control over decisionmaking in the third phase, 20 May through 4 June, which culminated in the bloody crackdown on Tiananmen Square.
- Finally, beginning on 5 June the hardliners turned their attention to consolidating power and removing potential threats to their control.

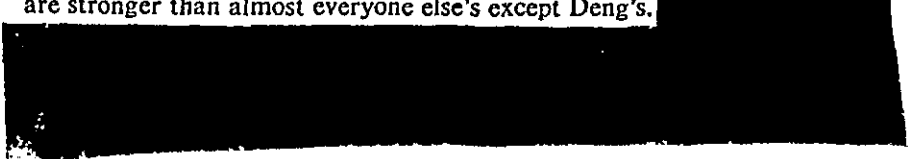
On the basis of leadership statements and press reporting during these four phases, we can draw several conclusions about decisionmaking during the crisis. First, Deng Xiaoping probably approved of and directed the entire crackdown. He signed the order sending the troops into Tiananmen Square on 3-4 June; he brought back the old guard when the party Standing Committee faltered; and he personally dealt with the military. Deng was clearly worried that the demonstrators would lead China toward anarchy. He witnessed the crowds in the square, knowing that demonstrations had spread to cities throughout China and were increasingly supported by workers and party and government officials. When the crowds began sporting signs calling for his dismissal, the independent student and worker unions grew in size and aggressiveness, and his protege Zhao broke with the leadership and made his pitch for the crowd's support, Deng clearly believed that Communist Party rule was in jeopardy.

Second, next to Deng, Yang Shangkun was the pivotal figure in the crisis. Military units under his relatives or allies appeared to figure prominently in the suppression, and his speech on 24 May was urged on officials after the crackdown for study. He was involved in approving the 26 April editorial in the party paper *People's Daily*, which laid out the regime's hardline stand on the demonstrations, and we know that he was present at many of the pivotal meetings leading up to the declaration of martial law


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and the decision to storm the square. His major rival, Zhao Ziyang, is now gone, and no one with the stature to oppose Yang has emerged. His ties to the military—which has again become a major player in Chinese politics—are stronger than almost everyone else's except Deng's.




The actions of members of the old guard<sup>1</sup> during the crisis, and the homage paid to them in the press since the massacre, indicate that they have reinserted themselves into the front ranks of the Chinese political process. We believe that, although they are "semi-retired," their influence behind the scenes early in the crisis was particularly strong. They did not become publicly prominent, however, until after policy had been set and martial law decided upon on 20 May. Individuals such as Chen Yun certainly influenced decisionmaking through their proteges in the earlier stages of the crisis. As the crisis continued to grow, Deng brought the old guard deeper into regime planning and publicly highlighted their support for the hard line.



Zhao Ziyang appeared to believe that he could exploit the demonstrations and halt the conservative inroads on his reform programs. It appears almost as though he was willing to stoke the fires of discontent in order to regain the political advantage. From the outset of the crisis in mid-April, Zhao consistently set himself apart from the hardliners. Zhao's allies were mainly in the party, although he needed Deng's backing to keep other party factions in line and to be assured of military backing. Where Zhao miscalculated was on the question of Deng's support. Once he lost that, he was finished politically. He then compounded his errors by going outside the party. Zhao and his supporters—once they realized that they could not alter the hard line decided upon on 24 April—tried to use the crowd to intimidate Zhao's opponents within the party and leadership. Thus, like Deng and the old guard, Zhao and his supporters opted for informal channels to press their views, but these could not overcome Deng's ties to the military and his support from the hardliners.



<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this paper, the "old guard" refers to a small group of party elders—most in their 80s or 90s—who have criticized Deng's economic reform program as straying too far from orthodox Marxist-Leninism. For the most part, they do not hold official positions in the party or government. Most prominent among the old guard are Chen Yun, Peng Zhen, Bo Yibo, Wang Zhen, and Li Xiannian.



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The regime's approach to handling the crisis was fairly consistent throughout—do not yield on the question of political reforms and try to intimidate the demonstrators. Variations in policy were the result of: indecision on the part of the leadership on how to handle the unprecedented display of popular feeling; stalling tactics employed by the regime while it assured itself of—and then amassed—military support; [REDACTED]

The regime underestimated the depth of feeling against it and the staying power of the demonstrators, underscoring the degree to which it was—and remains—out of touch with the population. The regime continually misread—or, as the crisis drew out and leadership frustrations increased, chose to misread—the tenor of the crowd, and prolonged the crisis through a series of clumsy and provocative moves that closer contact with the people might have prevented. [REDACTED]

Zhao's efforts to change the policy—and the participation of his supporters in the demonstrations—probably contributed to the euphoria of the students, encouraging their intractability and eventually deepening the disillusionment and resentment against the regime. Once Zhao failed in the Standing Committee, his supporters in the press and at such organizations as the National People's Congress tried to force a policy reversal by appealing to the people and by trying to manipulate the demonstrations. This intensified the misperception that the reformers were gaining strength and would change the regime's policy toward the demonstrators, if only the students pushed hard enough. [REDACTED]

The provincial party and government elites played only a minor role in setting the regime's response to the demonstrations. Deng, Yang, and the old guard appear to have had most of their partisans in the capital rather than the provinces, where the reformers appeared stronger. Thus a hardliner like Chen Yun could look to his proteges in the center's economic offices, and Yang Shangkun could rely on his supporters apparently firmly entrenched in the PLA headquarters units [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] This line between the center and provinces cannot be drawn too starkly, of course—Defense Minister Qin Jiwei and the Beijing Military Region leadership

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were at best only lukewarm in their support of the crackdown, and Zhao supporters dominated some economic offices and the press and propaganda sectors. [REDACTED]

As in previous Chinese political crises, the formal channels failed. In intraparty disputes where the divisions are too deep to permit a compromise—in both Mao's struggle against the party apparatus in 1966 and Deng's ouster of the Maoist faction in 1978-79, for example—one side tries to move the dispute outside the inner circle once it realizes that it cannot win party approval. These actions invariably undermine the party's image of unity and counteract its attempts to portray itself as infallible. Deng tried to prevent future outbreaks by strengthening the party and government institutions. Yet, when the deep splits within the party were intensified by the crisis, Deng himself proved unwilling to allow the structure he helped create to function without his direction. Instead, he sought to use the continuing influence of the old guard, whose members were in theory retired, to counter Zhao. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] But Deng's pushing the military back into the political forefront went against his earlier efforts to get them out. Moreover, the military does not appear to be united. Some officers were clearly reluctant to reenter the political arena. Qin Jiwei opposed using troops, as did the old marshals and, reportedly, many other senior officers. Indeed, we believe some officers may also resent the prominence Yang Shangkun and his family members and immediate coterie have gained. Yet the use of informal channels has not resolved the problems of fragmented leadership that helped produce the crisis in the first place. What it has done is further weaken China's formal political institutions by undermining whatever little credibility and legitimacy Deng had tried to restore to them. (C NF)

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## Contents

	<i>Page</i>
Scope Note	iii
Summary	v
15-26 April: The Regime Tries Intimidation	1
26 April-20 May: Zhao Presses for Moderation—and Fails	3
20 May to 3-4 June: The Hardliners Prevail	9
4-24 June: Unreason Triumphant	15

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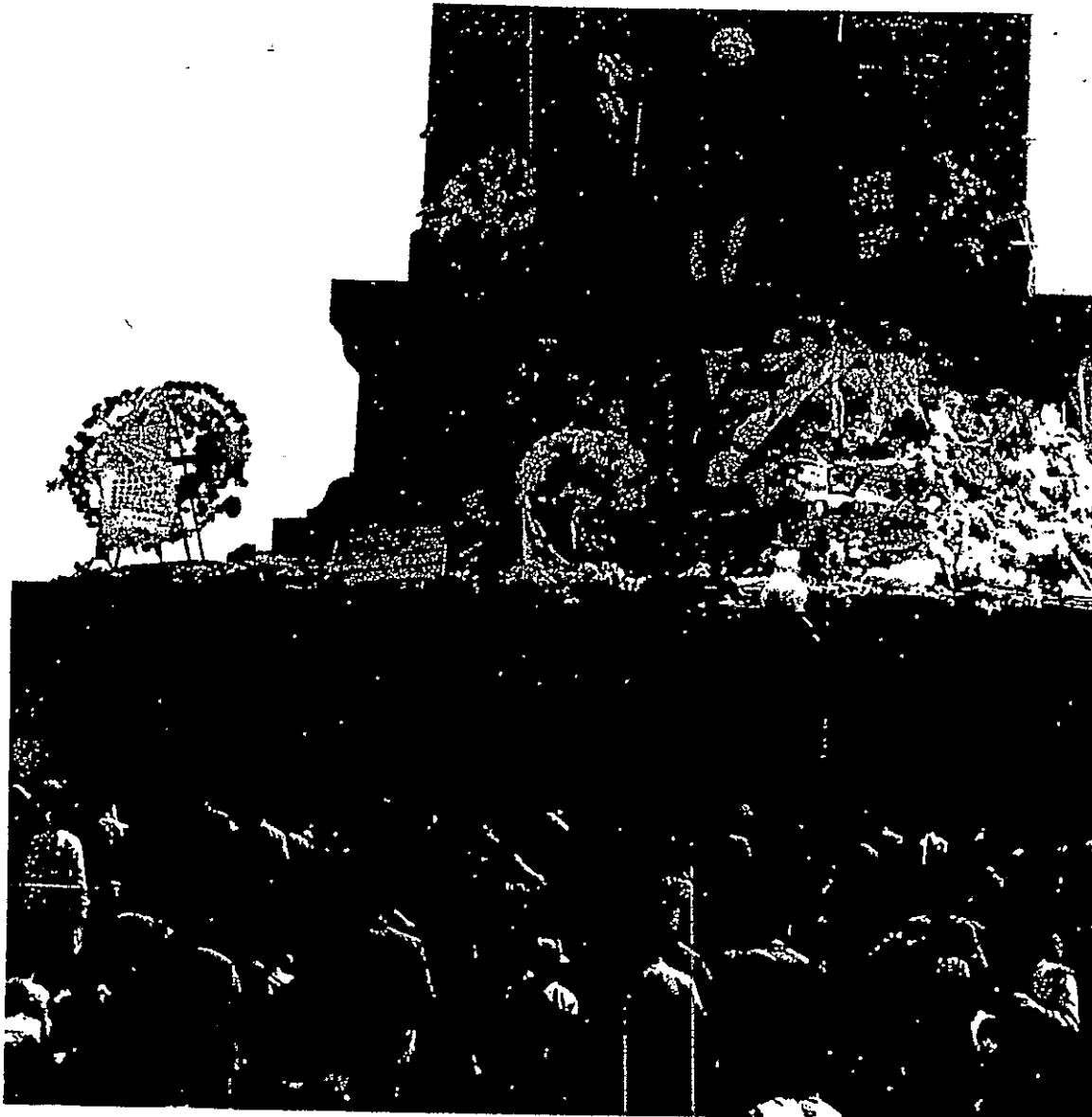


Figure 1. 15 April. Hu Yaobang dies and demonstrations begin

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**The Road to the Tiananmen  
Crackdown: An Analytic  
Chronology of Chinese  
Leadership Decision Making**

**15-26 April: The Regime Tries Intimidation**

Former party leader Hu Yaobang's sudden death on 15 April, and the student demonstrations that began two days later, caught the regime unprepared. While it apparently had expected demonstrations around the 70th anniversary of the 4 May Movement,<sup>2</sup> We believe Hu's death and the unexpectedly large size and rapid growth of the demonstrations that followed kept the regime off-balance and led to misjudgments throughout the crisis. The students, also, were probably surprised by the turnout, but moved more quickly. Their early successes in the face of leadership indecisiveness heightened the students' sense of power and probably led them to be more aggressive and intractable than they would otherwise have been.

We believe this constant need to catch up to events, and the accompanying sense that the situation was continually slipping out of control, possibly led the regime to blunder its way through the crisis by opting for unnecessarily provocative measures that fueled rather than cooled the demonstrations. As the crisis dragged on, the leadership became increasingly distracted by its own internal struggles, and its attention was continually divided between contending with the demonstrations and with the internal power struggle.

The leadership's first efforts to resolve the crisis were ineffective.

the

<sup>2</sup> The 4 May Movement was a student-led movement founded in 1919 to protest the poor treatment China received at the Paris Peace Conference. It was sparked by Japan's demands for the transfer of German interests in Shandong to Tokyo.

declaration by the Beijing Municipal Committee that the demonstrations were illegal. This failed to deter the students, some of whom actually attempted to storm the leadership compound of Zhongnanhai on 18-19 April. After this, the students were left alone, probably in the hope that protests would end with Hu Yaobang's funeral on 22 April. When the students continued demonstrating, the leadership met to reconsider its course of action.

The regime's basic line—which it tried to follow throughout the crisis—was probably set in the two days following Hu's burial. According to Hong Kong and official Chinese press, the entire Politburo met on 23 April and again on 24 April—twice the second day—including an “expanded” meeting, which was attended by several non-Politburo members.

Zhao visited North Korea during this time (23-30 April) and thus was unable to soften the regime's hardline stance. He attended only the Politburo meeting on 23 April. His ally on the party Standing Committee—party propaganda chief, Hu Qili—was at all the meetings, but Zhao's conciliatory touch was lacking. After Beijing party secretary Li Ximing described the situation, the Politburo tried to intimidate the demonstrators, ordering Hu Qili to draft an editorial for the party paper, *People's Daily*, condemning the demonstrations, creating a committee under Hu and party security chief Qiao Shi to deal with the students, and urging party cadre to “mobilize” to “defend” Beijing.

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Figure 2. Li Xiannian, Li Peng, Zhao Ziyang, and Yang Shangkun

Decisions during the period were still made within the formal party structure. The party Standing Committee and the Politburo met at least five times between 15 and 26 April.

During this period, hardliners such as Chen Yun were certainly involved, but mainly in a secondary, supportive role. Deng, Yang, and the Standing Committee—minus Zhao—largely determined the regime's course.

Moves to implement this hardline approach began almost immediately. On 25 April, according to Hong Kong press, the party Standing Committee again met (without party General Secretary Zhao, who was still in North Korea) and under Li Peng's chairmanship toughened its stance, authorizing the use of "whatever means necessary" to end the protests. Following that meeting, Li Peng warned Chinese journalists to support the regime in their reporting. These confrontational measures were capped by the publication on 26 April of the hardline *People's Daily* editorial—reportedly approved by Deng, Li Peng, and Yang Shangkun—that inflamed the students and worsened the crisis.

At a time when a conciliatory gesture may have defused the situation, the worst fears of a leadership—at heart intolerant of political pluralism—ruled. Deng Xiaoping, who the Hong Kong press stated watched the student demonstrations from the Great Hall on 18 April, probably saw the demonstrations as an attack on him and all he had built, invoking memories of the Cultural Revolution and other periods of disorder in China.

A leading hardliner, Chen Yun, in a speech to party cadre on 17 April, pushed for "more discipline" for the students.

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**26 April-20 May: Zhao Presses for Moderation—and Fails**

This period was characterized by Zhao's return and his attempts either to soften the regime's position or to publicly dissociate himself from it. As it became clear that his was a losing effort, we believe Zhao or his supporters tried to fuel the demonstrations by urging—or at least not discouraging—reform-minded party and government officials and organizations to participate in them. Zhao's struggle against the policy agreed upon during his absence caused confusion within the leadership and sent contradictory signals to outside observers. The period ended with the party Standing Committee losing any role it may have had in the decisionmaking process; the public resurfacing of orthodox party elders opposed to many aspects of Deng's economic reforms; and Zhao's submission of his resignation as party General Secretary.

Immediately following the 26 April editorial, the regime appears to have tried to implement the uncompromising approach chosen at the 24 April Politburo meetings. On 26 April, it held "large cadre meetings" to condemn the students. The official Chinese press reported the convening of two meetings on the heels of the 26 April editorial. These were an emergency "high-level" party meeting on 26 April and an expanded Politburo meeting—which probably included party old guard members among the attendees—held the next day. On the 28th, the party formed a "Student Affairs Committee" chaired by Li Peng and including Qiao Shi, Hu Qili, Minister for Public Security Wang Fang, and State Education Commission head Li Tieying. Except for Hu Qili, all the committee members supported the hard line. On the same day, Chinese media also published Beijing party chief Li Ximing's harsh comments about the demonstrations and on the next day called for stability in China.

When the editorial inflamed the students, the regime softened its stance, playing for time and trying to undermine student unity. It issued a joint Central Committee-State Council guidance on 27 April suggesting that the students be given channels to express their views—as long as these did not include any efforts to adopt a "Western system"—and pushing for the avoidance of bloodshed, although promising a "tough line" against looters and arsonists. The same day, a State Council representative said that the Council was ready to talk to the students "at any time." Government television aired a "dialogue" between State Council spokesman Yuan Mu and the students on 29 April, and Beijing's mayor and party leader met the next day with "official" student representatives. These measures neither frightened nor mollified the demonstrators, who continued to march, attracting even more supporters, including members from proreform offices within such party think tanks as the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. Indeed, the students were either so emboldened or annoyed by the leadership's actions that they gave the National People's Congress (NPC) an ultimatum on 2 May demanding that the regime meet their demands within 48 hours.

The leadership was clearly unprepared for the students' intransigence and the increasing popular support they were receiving. During the first week of May, for example, Deng apparently felt relaxed enough about the government's ability to handle the situation to go out of town. The Chinese press reported him to be in Qingdao on 2 May; other press reports put him in nearby Beidaihe during this same period. When the measures did not end the crisis, the regime—apparently without Deng in Beijing to provide guidance—stumbled. It was during this week of indecision and floundering that Zhao reentered the picture.

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Figure 3. Crowd in Tiananmen Square.

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When Zhao returned on 30 April, he appeared determined to repair the damage he believed had been caused by the 26 April editorial and the hardline approach built around it. Following a party Standing Committee meeting on 1 May, Zhao began drafting his speech for the Asian Development Bank (ADB) meeting. According to Beijing Mayor Chen Xitong's speech on 30 June, which publicly criticized Zhao's actions during the crisis, Zhao obtained neither Deng's nor the party's approval of the text of this speech.

Then, while the State Council was rejecting the student ultimatum on 3 May, Zhao was simultaneously providing the students with an advance copy of his conciliatory ADB speech, which he gave the following day. On 6 May, Zhao addressed a meeting of political workers, calling for further "openness" in reporting the protests. This marks the beginning of the public split between Zhao and the hardliners over how to handle the demonstrations, fueling student hopes and masking the regime's hardline approach.

Throughout this period, the reformers supporting Zhao tried to influence events outside the inner party circles, relying on their supporters in the NPC and in the propaganda and media areas. The day after the publication of the 26 April editorial, party propaganda chief and Zhao ally Hu Qili calmed editors' fears by telling them they could report on the demonstrations honestly. Over the next few days, the Chinese public was thus treated to a fairly open press. By 9 May, Chinese journalists were so encouraged by events that more than 1,000 had presented the government with a petition calling for more press freedom.

The split between Zhao and the hardliners grew quickly. At an enlarged Politburo meeting on 8 May, the Beijing city leadership complained about Zhao's tactics and attitudes. At another enlarged Politburo meeting two days later, Zhao presented his five-point

program<sup>4</sup> for resolving the crisis—which, according to the Hong Kong press, received support only from NPC Chairman Wan Li. During the same meeting, Shanghai party chief Jiang Zemin asked for support for his firing of dissident Shanghai newspaper editor Qin Benli—a move that Zhao had criticized sometime earlier.

Zhao's persistence in presenting his case may have been caused in part either by his misreading of Deng's position or by being deliberately misled by Deng. Zhao may have viewed Deng's apparent absence from these two meetings—he was reported by the Hong Kong press to have been in Wuhan on 9 May—as an indirect vote of confidence. Furthermore, if Hong Kong press reports are accurate, Deng apologized to Zhao in private for his "miscalculations" in handling the students.

On 13 May, the student protestors began their hunger strike and occupation of Tiananmen Square, injecting new urgency into the crisis. At this time, Zhao made what appears to be his last attempt to alter the Politburo's hard line. During at least five Standing Committee meetings between 13 and 19 May—held against the background of the 15-18 May visit by Soviet General Secretary Gorbachev and the student occupation of Tiananmen Square—Zhao repeatedly opposed the regime's handling of the crisis. He broke consensus on every vote—thus shattering the image of party unity that the leadership traditionally tries to portray—and in the end probably tendered his resignation:

- On 13 May, according to the Hong Kong press, he called on the Committee to reject the 26 April editorial. He lost, 4 to 1.

<sup>4</sup> Zhao's five-point program proposed to negate the 26 April *People's Daily* editorial; have Zhao take full responsibility for the editorial's retraction; create a "special bureau" under NPC auspices to investigate the actions of children of senior officials, including Zhao's two sons; detail the personal activities and finances of all government officials of vice ministerial rank or above; and abolish all cadre privileges and announce the income and perks received by high-level cadres.



Figure 4. 18 May. Zhao visits students on hunger strike the day before his fall.

- On 16 May, the press says he urged the Committee to be more receptive to student demands. He lost, 4 to 1.
- On 17 May, at a meeting the Hong Kong press says he called, Zhao again presented his five-point proposal for dealing with the crisis.

The Hong Kong press reported another version in which Deng on 17 May summoned the Standing Committee, plus Yang Shangkun and Li Xiannian, to hear Zhao's proposals—which they rejected by a vote of 6 to 2 (Zhao and Hu). According to Hong Kong and Chinese press, at a meeting on 18 May only Zhao opposed the Standing Committee decision to consider the use of or to use force to quell the demonstrations. Both Deng and Yang were present for this meeting. Later that day Li Peng met for the first time in a combative televised "dialogue" with student leaders. Li lectured them but was abruptly cut off by student leader Wuer Kaixi, who stated, "We don't have much time to listen to you, Premier Li." The following day, the Standing Committee decided to place Beijing under martial law. Zhao and Hu Qili opposed the decision.

The reformers' efforts to overturn the decisions to act decisively against the students apparently demonstrated to Deng that he could no longer depend on his General Secretary or the party Standing Committee. Zhao, often with Hu Qili's backing, prevented the

party Standing Committee meetings from achieving a consensus on confronting the demonstrators. More important, it was Zhao's actions during these meetings—and his disclosure to the world during Li's meeting with Gorbachev that Deng made all important decisions in China based on a secret agreement laid out at the first plenum of the 13th Party Congress in 1987—that finally alienated him from his mentor. Although this disclosure was hardly surprising, it was unforgivable public distancing by Zhao of himself from the policy decisions on the student problem.

The party Standing Committee's disunity over how to handle the impending confrontation with the students encouraged Deng Xiaoping to rely more heavily on the informal interpersonal network that has long characterized China's leadership politics. The most influential group of potential supporters were his comrades among the party's old guard, in recent years the major critics of his economic reform program. The hardliners' actions after the declaration of martial law on 20 May seem to indicate that they coordinated their efforts with Deng

Deng also worked to ensure military backing for the hard line he was taking. He was aided by longtime associate Yang Shangkun, who had served for the last several years as Deng's daily link to the Chinese military. Even so, this proved to be no easy task as military region commanders reportedly ignored his calls to support a crackdown from late April to mid-June, not wishing to become embroiled in a political struggle. On 18 May, probably following Gorbachev's departure from China and the day before the party Standing Committee's vote of 19 May on martial law, the Hong Kong press claims the "enlarged" party Military Affairs Commission met with Deng in Wuhan to discuss how to handle the demonstrators. Reportedly present at the meeting, albeit hesitatedly, were the Commission membership and all military region commanders. We believe they voted, with reservations, for martial law.

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Once he had the military and the old guard behind him, we believe Deng called a joint meeting of the party Central Committee and the State Council on the evening of 19 May to approve the decision agreed to earlier in the day by the party Standing Committee to use the military. According to official Chinese press, Qiao Shi presided over the meeting, Li Peng spoke on behalf of the party Standing Committee in favor of martial law, and Yang Shangkun—whose speech would, of course, indicate military support for the decision—spoke in support of Li. Zhao, who, in his capacity as party General Secretary and head of the party Standing Committee, should have given the speech, not only refused, but did not attend. Thus, by the time he again went out into Tiananmen Square for an emotional meeting with the students on the evening of 19 May, Zhao was out of power. In that meeting a tearful Zhao made a final plea to the students to leave and stated, "I'm sorry, we've come too late." That night, units from the 15th Airborne Army, and from the 27th, 38th, and 63rd Group Armies, began moving to the outskirts of Beijing. Martial law went into effect the following day at 1000 although huge crowds of students and citizens blocked their way keeping the military from imposing the decree. [REDACTED]

The declaration of martial law marked the end not only of Zhao's already waning political influence, but also that of the party Standing Committee. The Committee's meeting on 19 May to consider imposing martial law was its last before the 3-4 June massacre. With two of its members—Zhao and Hu Qili—possibly under house arrest, its legitimacy and usefulness were seriously weakened. Instead, Deng began to rely more and more on the "enlarged" Politburo, which enabled him to bring in the old guard and the military. The press and the NPC were still not under control, the military had yet to be tested, and the provinces had not been deeply involved in what was mainly a Beijing phenomenon. But the political struggle between the "reformers" and the "hardliners" that had characterized the last several years of Chinese leadership politics ended at least temporarily when Deng brought back the old guard to help him assert the hardliners' political primacy. [REDACTED]

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*Figure 5. 20 May. Martial law declared, but crowds make it unenforceable.*

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## 20 May to 3-4 June: The Hardliners Prevail

With the political eclipse of Zhao Ziyang, the leadership during this period concentrated on quelling the demonstrations and bringing the press, the party, the government, and the military into line. The period was marked by the regime's unwillingness to tolerate any opposition, and its increasing reliance on armed force to solve its political problems.

While the world watched the dramatic opposition to the military by the people in Beijing on 20 May, the hardliners moved to clean out pockets of opposition among the party and government elites. The official Chinese press stated that, on either 20 or 21 May, State Council spokesman Yuan Mu called "responsible persons" to Zhongnanhai for criticism. We believe these "persons" may have included Zhao aides Bao Tong, An Zhiwei, and Du Rungheng, who the Hong Kong and Western press reported had been dismissed from their positions within the party hierarchy. The last glimmer of hope for the reformers, the return from the United States of NPC Chairman Wan Li—who in theory could call an emergency session of the NPC to overturn the martial law proclamation—was extinguished on 24 May. When Wan Li's plane arrived in Shanghai, he immediately disappeared from public view.

The leadership also began pressing for expressions of support. On the 20th, the official Chinese press published letters of support from various party front groups, several provinces, and most military regions. On 21 May, the party Central Committee and the State Council jointly urged regional officials to declare "their positions and attitude" toward Li Peng's martial law declaration by noon. This deadline was not met by all provinces, although all eventually backed martial law to some extent. To make sure that provincial leaders got the message, the regime summoned each provincial party secretary to Beijing for one-on-one sessions with top party leaders, according to official press. Military backing for martial law was implied in the publication on 24 May of a letter of support given by the three People's Liberation Army (PLA) General Staff departments.

The official

## Health Rumors

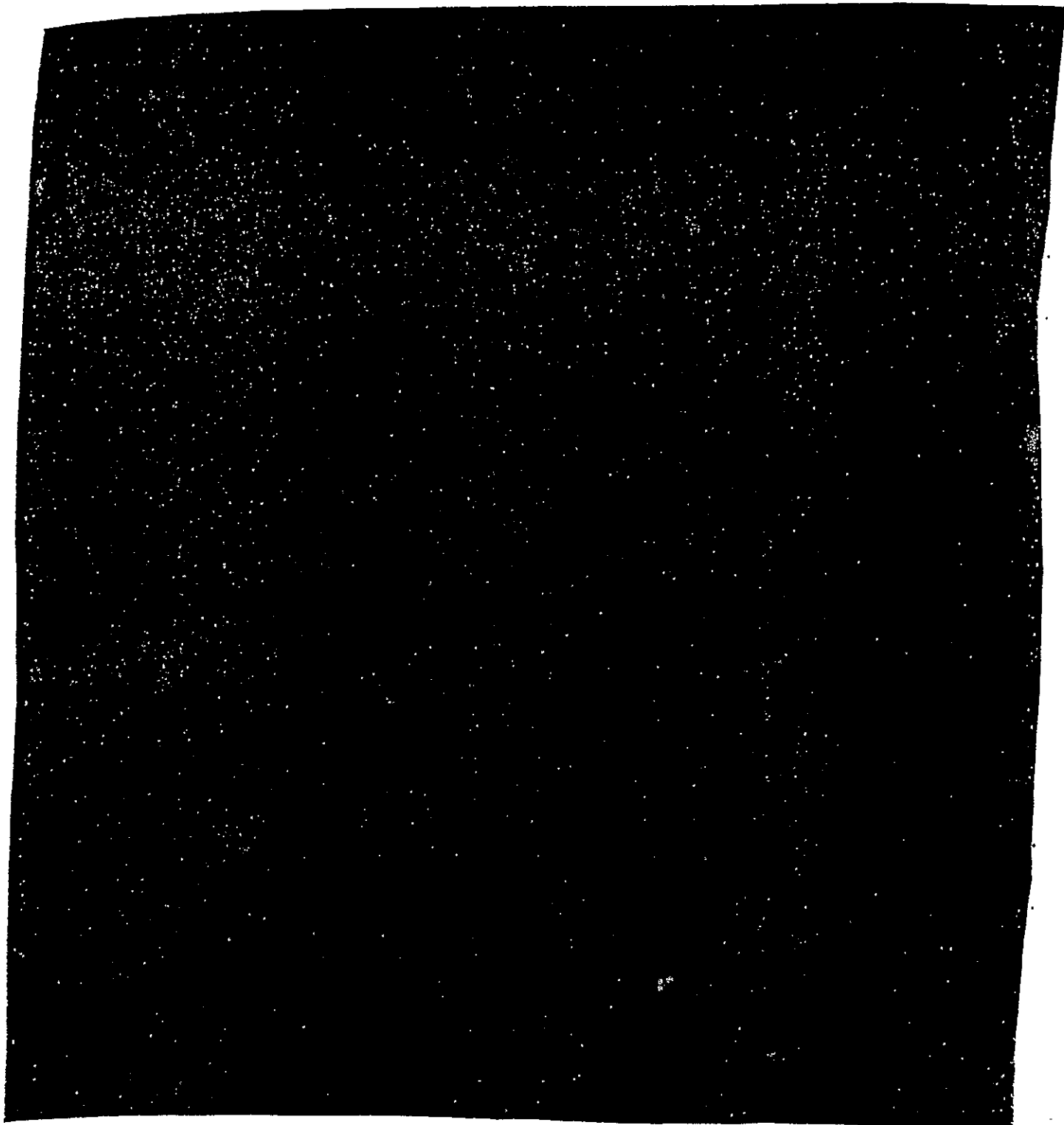
Following the declaration of martial law on 20 May, the Chinese leadership disappeared from public view. Their absence produced a series of rumors that underline the confusion characterizing the crisis as well as reflecting popular attitudes about the leadership. Those mentioned most often in these rumors were the leaders whose removal the crowd wanted:

- *Li Peng: rumored to be shot on 5 June by a young officer whose girlfriend and sister supposedly had been killed on Tiananmen Square the day before. This was later found to be a deliberate hoax fabricated by a Chinese student. Li was also reported "not to be in his right mind" due to the stresses of the crisis.*
- *Deng Xiaoping: rumored on 24 May and again immediately after the 4 June massacre to be hospitalized for "heart failure" or a kidney condition. Deng was also reported to have died of cancer on 5 June and again during the first week of August 1989. In both cases, the official Chinese press was forced publicly to refute the rumors.*

press also reported trips by senior Chinese officials to the provinces—probably to drum up support and to inform local officials about Beijing's assessment of the crisis.

The regime's efforts to rally support continued to meet with resistance from members of the elite. On 20 May, according to Hong Kong and Western press, "100 high-ranking officials" sent a letter to the party Standing Committee calling the students "patriotic," an indirect criticism of martial law. Two days later, the NPC Standing Committee almost unanimously, according to the Hong Kong press, expressed its opposition to martial law. Several retired military leaders, and more than 100 active military officers—which Hong Kong and Western press reported included Minister of Defense Qin Jiwei and commander of

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the Beijing Military Region, Zhou Yibing—also informed Deng of their opposition to using troops against the demonstrators. None of these people had any impact beyond alerting Deng and the hardliners of the danger they posed.

From the outset of martial law, the hardliners went after the press and propaganda sectors, both of which they saw as either out of control or in unsympathetic hands. During the first two days of martial law, the Hong Kong press reported that the regime had formed a "press guidance group." It was composed of party hardliners—Li Peng was chairman, and its members included State Council spokesman Yuan Mu, Vice Minister of the State Education Commission He Dongchang, and Beijing party propaganda chief Li Zhijian. Hu Qili was replaced as party propaganda chief by hardliner Wang Rengzhi, who himself had been removed by Zhao in 1987.

Cruder methods were used against individual media operations. Military troops occupied the offices of *People's Daily* and China Central Television (CCTV) on 21 May. The paper's coverage of the situation the following day, however, appeared split between the reform and conservative lines. Three days later, on the 24th, the regime announced that censors would be assigned to all newspaper offices. By then, all press except the English language *China Daily* were reported in the Hong Kong press as being under regime control. In addition, foreign satellite transmissions from Beijing were stopped (for the second time in a week) at midnight on the 24th, and troops occupied the offices of Beijing Telegraph, the Central Broadcasting Station, and Radio Beijing. Thus, by the end of the first week of martial law, the media and propaganda sectors, which had provided a platform for Zhao and his supporters, were under hardline control.

The hardliners signaled their ascendancy and legitimized their tactics during a three-day "closed" expanded Politburo meeting held 23-26 May at Xishan in the western suburbs of Beijing. The attendees included more than 100 "leading party, government, and army leaders." According to Hong Kong press, this meeting approved the restructuring of the party's propaganda and press sectors, supported the hard line

taken against the demonstrators, and designated Deng and party elders Chen Yun, Peng Zhen, and Li Xiannian as the party leaders empowered to deal with the students. The meeting was dominated by the hardliners—Yang Shangkun and Li Peng gave the major speeches, for example. Although the meeting lasted until the 26th, it was essentially over a day earlier, when Li Peng reappeared in public greeting three Third World ambassadors. That day, the State Council issued a circular ordering a halt to student travel to Beijing.

The actual decisions, however, were made elsewhere. On 20 May, according to Hong Kong press accounts, the "old guard" met to decide whether to place Zhao under house arrest. Among those reported as attending were Deng, Li Peng, Qiao Shi, and Wang Zhen. Prior to the opening of the Xishan meeting on 23-26 May, a smaller preparatory group—composed of Central Committee members in Beijing, the Central Advisory Commission (headed by Chen Yun), and the party's Central Discipline Inspection Commission (headed by Qiao Shi)—met to plan the Xishan meeting's agenda. The Hong Kong press stated that Deng apparently spoke at this meeting and then left, possibly for Wuhan to ensure military support for confronting the demonstrators. On the 26th, CCTV televised a speech by Chen Yun before the Central Advisory Commission Standing Committee, in which he expressed support for his protégé Li Peng and urged the party to "expose the plot" against it.

The regime, faced with the unwillingness of units from the 38th Group Army to press through the crowds blocking its progress toward Tiananmen Square, redoubled its efforts to keep the military in line. Deng's trip to Wuhan on 22 May probably had that goal—as well as ensuring the military's allegiance to him personally. In addition, while the Xishan meeting was under way, someone—probably Deng or Yang Shangkun—called an expanded, emergency meeting of the party Central Military Commission on 24 May, according to the official press. Again,

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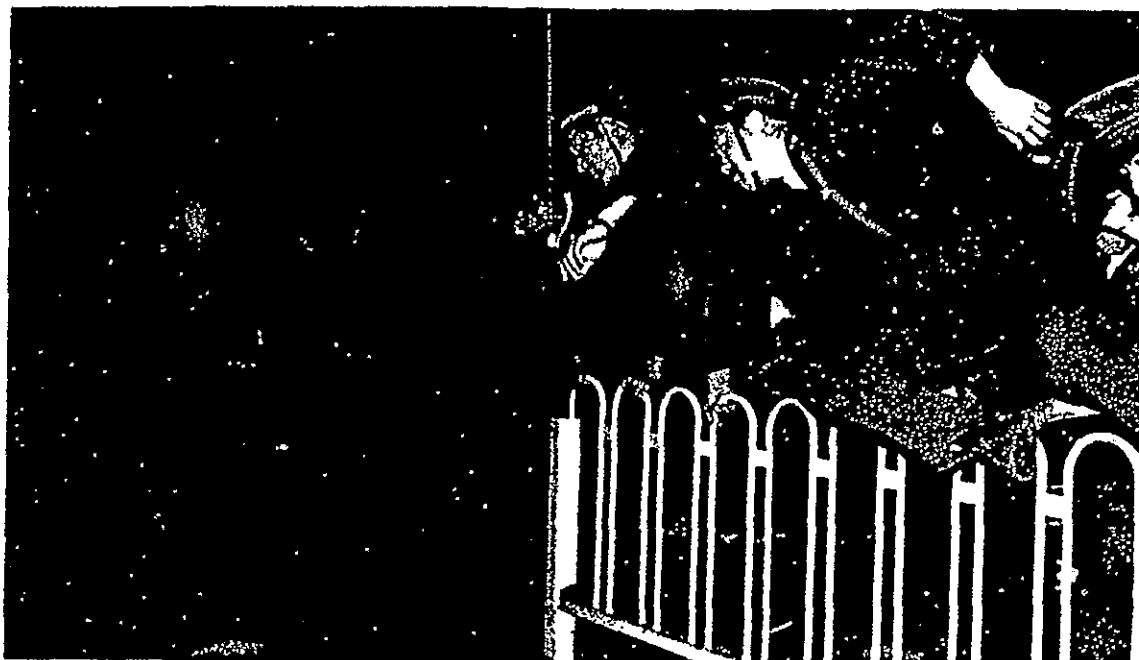


Figure 7. 3 June. Troops move to clear the Square.

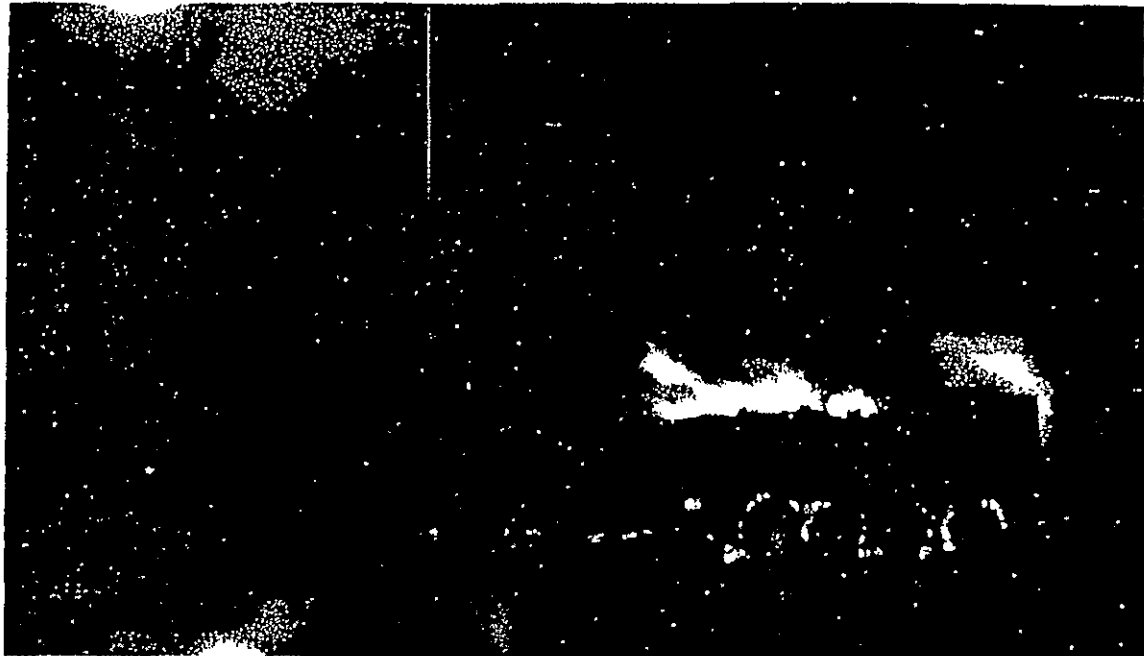
the reason for the meeting was probably to convince an uncertain military that a crackdown probably requiring armed force was necessary to save China from anarchy. Yang Shangkun spoke at this meeting, outlining Zhao's "crimes" against the party and people and discussing the threat the demonstrators posed to the country. On the 25th, a Central Committee document was sent to military units around the country, stating that Zhao had headed an antiparty clique and urging the PLA to be ready to support martial law. At this time, the Beijing Military Region finally publicly supported martial law.

While agreeing to crack down on the demonstrators, the leadership remained undecided on how to handle Zhao and his supporters. Initially, they took a hard line. Yang Shangkun's speech at the 22 May expanded Politburo meeting, for example, claimed that Zhao's actions gave the impression that the party had "two headquarters." The next day, at the Xishan meeting, Zhao—who may or may not have attended—was charged with orchestrating the student un-

rest. On 24 May, Li Peng, Yang Shangkun, and Li Ximing accused Zhao of heading an "antiparty clique" and engaging in "conspiracy." Following the end of the Xishan meeting, according to the Hong Kong press, the leadership informed "persons in charge" in the military that Zhao and his antiparty clique would be dealt with at a party plenum the following week.

For the next several days, the press gave full play to attacks on Zhao and his supporters. NPC cadres were urged to study Li Peng's and Yang Shangkun's speeches made at Xishan. The media touted Li Xian-nian's speech at the 27 May meeting of the China People's Political Consultation Conference (CPPCC), in which he stated the CPPCC supported Deng and Li against "individuals in leading organs" who were "one major cause" of the demonstrations. The leadership also distributed a Central Committee circular outlining Zhao's crimes. The newspapers on the 27th also highlighted a Chen Yun speech critical of Zhao. Wan

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...but meet resistance.

Li reappeared and backed Li Peng. Finally, on 28 May, provincial leaders were brought to Beijing for a one-day "central work conference" to hear the party line on Zhao.

But the campaign against Zhao did not go as planned. The party plenum, which the Hong Kong press reported was scheduled for 29 May, was not held. Stories surfaced the same day that the accusations against Zhao were being softened. A 30 May enlarged Politburo meeting at Xishan—which some press accounts state was attended by Deng and Chen Yun—was apparently unable to agree on the exact nature of the charges against Zhao. This meeting may have been the one that rescheduled the party plenum, which the Chinese press stated was now set for 5 June.

Parallel with the efforts against Zhao, the leadership began planning its moves against the demonstrators. On 28 May, the Hong Kong press reported that the government was forming "investigation groups" to identify party members involved in the demonstra-

tions. The next day, hardline party elder Peng Zhen, in a televised speech before the Standing Committee of the NPC, condemned the students. There was, according to the Hong Kong press, a meeting of the regional military commanders in the Beijing area on 31 May, probably under Yang Shangkun. According to some press reports, some commanders declined to come. This was followed the next day by a meeting of the old guard chaired by Chen Yun. On 3 June, the Beijing municipal committee issued a statement "recognizing the essence of the turmoil" and the "necessity of martial law," and claiming that a "small group" was causing the problems.

The leadership met again on the evening of 3 June to complete plans for attacking the demonstrators. The meeting, possibly another enlarged Politburo meeting, was chaired by Li Peng and Yang Shangkun. Among those reported by the Hong Kong press to have attended were "many ministers," officers from the

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PLA General Logistics Department [REDACTED]

"various" army commanders, and Li Ximing and some of his Beijing apparatus [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Deng did, however, sign the order drafted by Li and Yang sending troops into the square, according to the Hong Kong press [REDACTED]

Information about Deng's whereabouts between 24 May and his appearance in public on 9 June is conflicting. One Hong Kong press report has him suffering a heart attack on 28 May and being hospitalized for a week after that. Another has him at Lushan in Jiangxi province between 1-6 June. Both reports place him outside Beijing during the period around the massacre and are suspect for that reason. He is also reported in the Hong Kong press to have been at the enlarged Politburo meeting on 30 May at Xishan. Unless he was physically incapacitated, however, Deng's performance during the weeks leading up to the massacre supports the theory that he knew about and probably ordered the 3-4 June crackdown.

[REDACTED] During this period, the regime continued to pour troops into the area around Beijing. We are unclear, however, whether bringing in so many units from outside Beijing was because of leadership uncertainty over the reliability of some units of the 38th Group Army—some of whom did storm Tiananmen—or the leadership's desire to have all military region commanders demonstrate their support of the regime and be identified with the massacre. [REDACTED]

This period also witnessed the public return of the hardliners and the open shift of all real decisionmaking to informal channels. No party Standing Committee meetings were held, and the enlarged Politburo meetings were convened mainly to achieve acquiescence on the part of senior officials to decisions made by the inner party circle, which probably was composed at this time of Deng, Yang, the hardliners on the Standing Committee, and the old guard. We believe the leadership certainly had to spend a considerable amount of time and energy on convincing the military to agree to—or on negotiating the political price of its involvement in—the final use of force against the population of Beijing. [REDACTED]

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#### 4-24 June: Unreason Triumphant

The now ascendant hardline leadership spent most of this period consolidating its power and punishing its enemies. The regime finally held the party plenum, which registered publicly Zhao's downfall. The now-captive press put out the party line about the massacre, dissidents outside the party were identified and rounded up, and the leadership strove to demonstrate its unity to the outside world. The major immediate question for the regime was not how to cope with the international opprobrium it earned for the massacre, but what exactly to do with Zhao and the reform wing of the party, and who to reward for their involvement in the "successful" termination of the party struggle and the larger crisis on Tiananmen Square.

The first several days following the massacre were dominated by military action, and any political activity was confined largely to disseminating the regime's version of events. On 4 June, the *People's Liberation Army Daily* printed an editorial supporting the massacre. The next day, a joint Central Committee-State Council letter justified the crackdown as saving China from a "gang of counterrevolutionaries" who were conducting an "antiparty traitorous plot to aid bourgeois liberalization." A State Council statement on Chinese Central Television the same day essentially repeated these charges, as did *People's Daily*.

The regime also made efforts to project a return to normalcy. On 6 June, Xinhua reported that Li Peng had presided over a State Council meeting on economic affairs. Yao Yilin and Tian Jiyun—the latter rumored earlier to have been removed as a Zhao supporter—were also reported in attendance. The same day, Foreign Minister Qian Qichen left for his scheduled visit to Latin America. Li Peng and Wang Zhen appeared in public on 8 June, visiting the troops in Beijing. The provinces, however, were slow to express their support. During the first several days, only six of China's 30 provinces made statements backing Li Peng and the military crackdown.

The leadership then began moving against its opponents. On 7 June, the party Central Disciplinary Inspection Commission, in a televised statement, called for "severe punishment" for party members who took part in the "chaos." The State Education

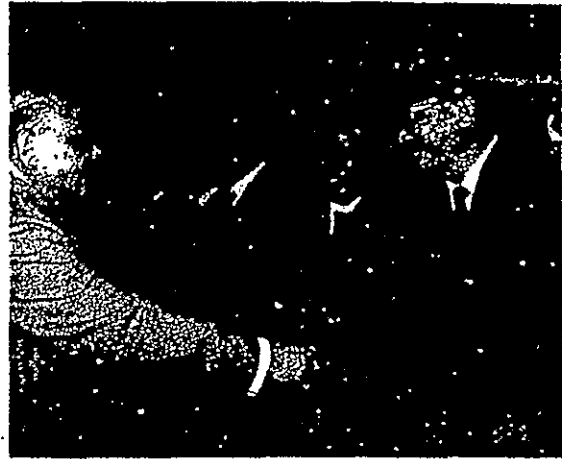


Figure 8. 9 June. Deng reappears and congratulates his generals.

Commission on the next day ordered students to resume class, "observe regulations," and expose activists. Two Beijing organizations, the unofficial student union and an unauthorized labor union, were banned, and authorities began arresting people in Beijing and several outlying cities. More recently, party leaders have emphasized the need for more political education for the students, and the Hong Kong press reported the start of intense political and military indoctrination classes.

With the resurfacing of Deng Xiaoping on 9 June—in the company of the Military Affairs Commission and members of the old guard—the regime signalled its victory. Most of the other provinces and the seven military regions quickly printed their expressions of support. Deng's address to the martial law troops that day was later cited as a document for study. On 20 June, Li Peng said in a televised statement that the "rebellion" was "basically over."

Still, the question of what to do with Zhao and his supporters remains. The plenum scheduled for 5 June was finally held on 23-24 June. Zhao lost all his party posts, and his case is still under investigation. Zhao's allies in the party Standing Committee and the

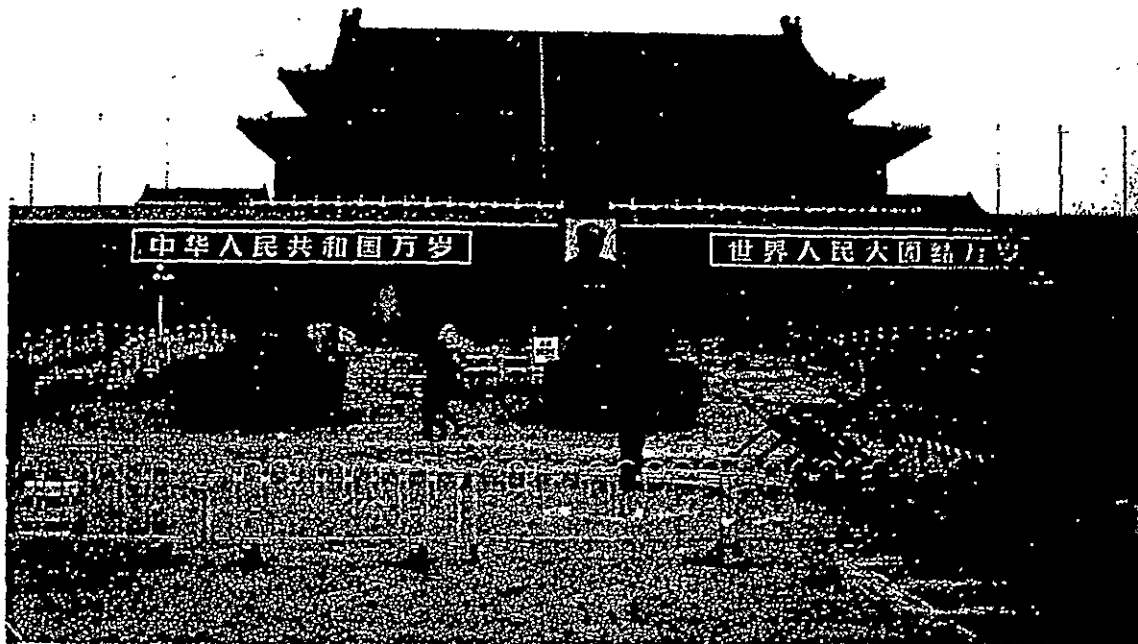


Figure 9. Tanks in Tiananmen Square.

Secretariat have been removed. Recent statements in the official Chinese press from the old guard—through its Central Advisory Commission—and from Qiao Shi's party security apparatus appear to indicate that the regime is shifting its emphasis from rounding up students and intellectuals to restoring party discipline and scouring out the pockets of Zhao supporters within the party itself.

The leadership, forced by events to concentrate its attention on its military and public security efforts, finally turned to party problems in mid-June. The regime convened the plenum and a preparatory meeting of the enlarged Politburo on 19-21 June. The results of the plenum, however, show that the struggle is not over. A complete listing of Politburo membership has not been announced. No one was nominated to fill Zhao's seat on the pivotal Military Affairs

Commission Standing Committee. Finally, Zhao's continued political limbo, and the almost daily public discussions about what to do with him or what to accuse him of, also appears to indicate that the leadership, now that it has weathered the immediate crisis, is no more united than before.